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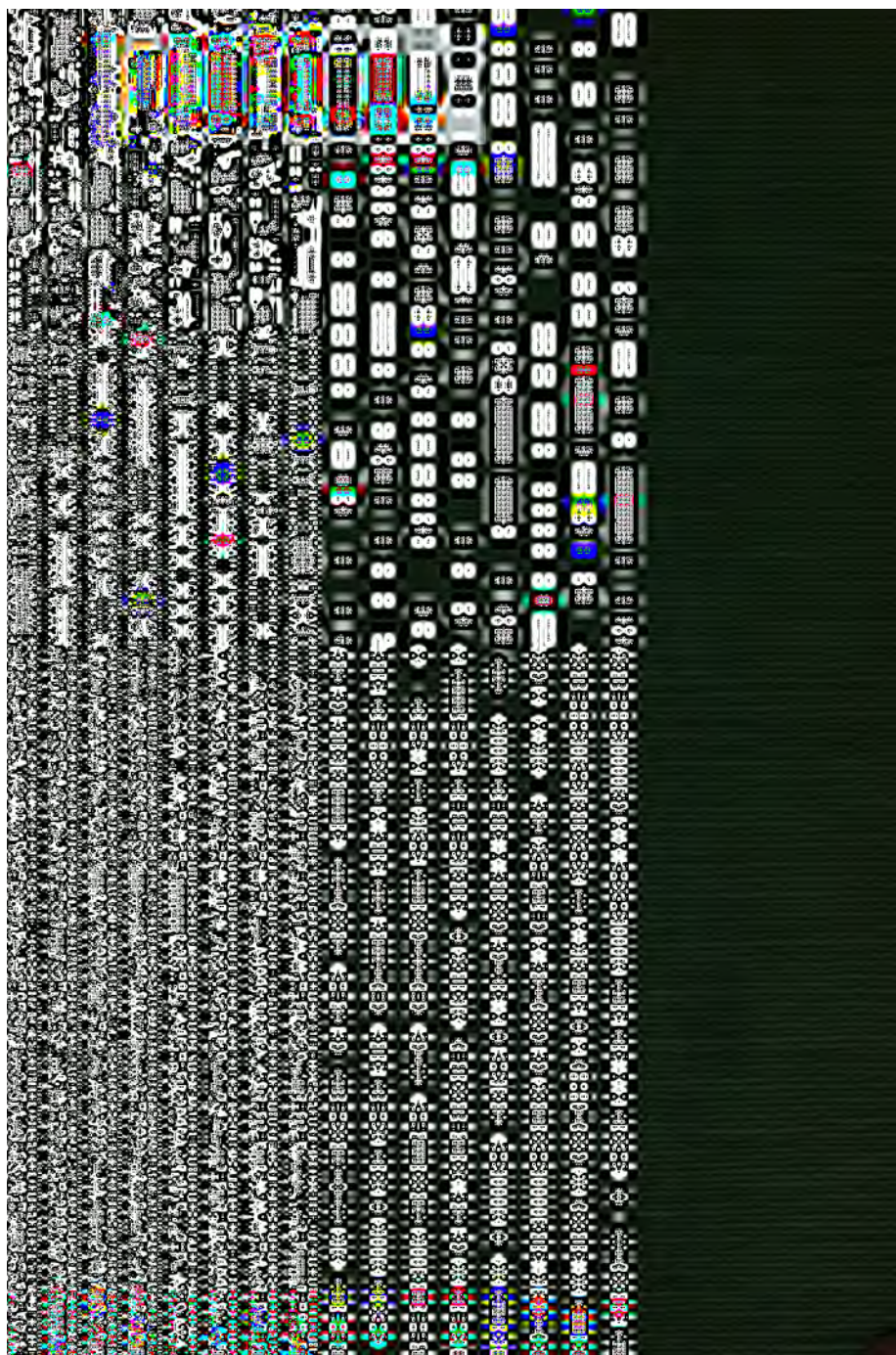
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# JANE SINCLAIR;

OR,

## THE FAWN OF SPRINGVALE.

BY

WILLIAM CARLETON,

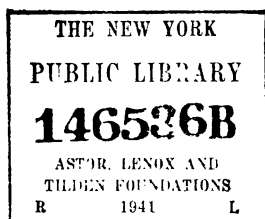
Author of "Valentine McClutchy," "Tales and Stories of the Irish  
Peasantry," "The Evil Eye," "Art Maguire," "Willy Rolly  
"Fardorougha, the Miser," "The Tithe Proctor,"  
"The Black Prophet," "Black Baronet," &c.

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JANE SINCLAIR;  
OR,  
THE FAWN OF SPRINGVALE.

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IF there be one object in life that stirs the current of human feeling more sadly than another, it is a young and lovely woman, whose intellect has been blighted by the treachery of him on whose heart, as on a shrine, she offered up the incense of her first affection. Such a being not only draws around her our tenderest and most delicate sympathies, but fills us with that mournful impression of early desolation, resembling so much the spirit of melancholy romance that arises from one of those sad and gloomy breezes which sweep unexpectedly over the sleeping surface of a summer lake, or moans with a tone of wail and sorrow through the green foliage of the wood under whose cooling shade we sink into our noon-day dream. Madness is at all times a thing of fearful mystery, but when it puts itself forth in a female gifted with youth and beauty, the pathos it causes becomes too refined for the grossness of ordinary sorrow—almost transcends our notion of the real, and assumes that wild interest which invests it with the dim and visionary light of the ideal.

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Such a malady constitutes the very romance of affliction, and gives to the fair sufferer rather the appearance of an angel fallen without guilt, than that of a being moulded for mortal purposes. Who ever could look upon such a beautiful ruin without feeling the heart sink, and the mind overshadowed with a solemn darkness, as if conscious of witnessing the still and awful gloom of that disastrous eclipse of reason, which, alas! is so often doomed never to pass away.

It is difficult to account for the mingled reverence, and terror, and pity with which we look upon the insane, and it is equally strange that in this case we approach the temple of the mind with deeper homage, when we know that the divinity has passed out of it. It must be from a conviction of this that uncivilized nations venerate deranged persons as inspired and, in some instance go so far, I believe, as even to pay them divine worship.

The principle, however, is in our nature: that for which our sympathy is deep and unbroken never fails to secure our compassion and respect, and ultimately to excite a still higher class of our moral feelings.

These preliminary observations were suggested to me by the fate of the beautiful but unfortunate girl, the melancholy events of whose life I am about to communicate. I feel, indeed, that in relating them, I undertake a task that would require a pen of unexampled power and delicacy. But it is probable that if I remained silent upon a history at once so true, and so full of sorrow, no other person

equally intimate with its incidents will every give them to the world. I cannot presume to detail unhappy Jane's calamity with the pathos due to a woe so singularly deep and delicate, or to describe that faithful attachment which gave her once laughing and ruby lips the white smile of a maniac's misery. This I cannot do; for who, alas, could ever hope to invest a dispensation so dark as her's with that rich tone of poetic beauty which threw its wild craces about her madness? For my part, I consider the subject not only as difficult, but sacred, and approach it on both accounts with devotion, and fear, and trembling. I need scarcely inform the reader that the names and localities are, for obvious reasons, fictitious, but I may be permitted to add that the incidents are substantially correct and authentic.

Jane Sinclair was the third and youngest daughter of a dissenting clergyman, in one of the most interesting counties in the north of Ireland. Her father was remarkable for that cheerful simplicity of character which is so frequently joined to a high order of intellect, and an affectionate warmth of heart. To a well tempered zeal in the cause of faith and morals, he added a practical habit of charity, both in word and deed, such as endeared him to all classes, but especially to those whose humble condition in life gave them the strongest claim upon his virtues, both as a man and a pastor. Difficult, indeed, would it be to find a minister of the gospel, whose practice and precept corresponded with such beautiful fitness, nor one who, in the midst of his



own domestic circle, threw such calm lustre around him as a husband and a father. A temper grave but sweet, wit playful and innocent, and tenderness that kept his spirit benignant to error without any compromise of duty, were the links which bound all hearts to him. Seldom have I known a Christian clergyman who exhibited in his own life so much of the unaffected character of apostolic holiness, nor one of whom it might be said with so much truth, that "he walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless."

His family, which consisted of his wife, one son, and three daughters, had, as might be expected, imbibed a deep sense of that religion, the serene beauty of which shone so steadily along their father's path of life. Mrs. Sinclair had been well educated, and in her husband's conversation and society found further opportunity of improving, not only her intellect, but her heart. Though respectably descended, she could not claim relationship with what may be emphatically termed the *gentry* of the country; but she could with that class so prevalent in the north of Ireland, which ranks in birth only one grade beneath them. I say in birth;—for in all the decencies of life, in the unostentatious bounties of benevolence, in moral purity, domestic harmony, and a conscientious observance of religion, both in the comeliness of its forms, and the cheerful freedom of its spirit, this class ranks immeasurably above every other which Irish society presents. They who compose it are not sufficiently wealthy to relax those pursuits of honorable

industry which constitute them, as a people, the ornament of our nation; nor does their good sense and decent pride permit them to follow the dictates of a mean ambition, by struggling to reach that false elevation, which is as much beneath them in all the virtues that grace life, as it is above them in the dazzling dissipation which renders the violation or neglect of its best duties a matter of fashionable etiquette, or the shameful privilege of high birth. To this respectable and independent class did the immediate relations of Mrs. Sinclair belong; and, as might be expected, she failed not to bring all its virtues to her husband's heart and household—there to soothe him by their influence, to draw fresh energy from their mutual intercourse, and to shape the habits of their family into that perception of self-respect and decent propriety, which in domestic duty, dress, and general conduct, uniformly results from a fine sense of moral feeling, blended with high religious principle.

This, indeed, is the class whose example has diffused that spirit of keen intelligence and enterprise throughout the north which makes the name of an Ulster manufacturer or merchant a synonyme for integrity and honor. From it is derived the creditable love of independence which operates upon the manners of the people and the physical soil of the country so obviously, that the *natural* appearance of the one may be considered as an appropriate exponent of the *moral* condition of the other. Aided by the genius of a practical and impressive creed, whose simple grandeur gives elevation and dignity to its

followers;—this class it is which, by affording employment, counsel, and example to many of the lower classes, brings peace and comfort to those who inhabit the white cottages and warm farmsteads of the north, and lights up its cultivated landscapes, its broad champaigns, and peaceful vales, into an aspect so smiling, that even the very soil seems to proclaim and partake of the happiness of its inhabitants. Indeed, few spots in the north could afford the spectator a better opportunity of verifying our observations as to the mild beauty of the country, than the residence of the amiable clergyman whose unhappy child's fate has furnished us with the affecting circumstances we are about to lay before the reader.

Springvale House, Mr. Sinclair's residence, was situated on an eminence that commanded a full view of the sloping valley from which it had its name. Along this vale, winding towards the house in a northern direction, ran a beautiful tributary stream, accompanied for nearly two miles in its progress by a small but well conducted road, which indeed had rather the character of a green lane than a public way, being but very little of a thoroughfare. Nothing could surpass this delightful vale in the soft and serene character of its scenery. Its sides, partially wooded, and cultivated with surpassing taste, were not so precipitous as to render habitation in its bosom inconvenient. They sloped up gradually and gracefully on each side, presenting to the eye a number of snow-white residences, each standing upon the brow of some

white table or undulation, and surrounded by grounds sufficiently spacious to allow of green lawns, ornamented plantations, and gardens, together with a due proportion of land for cultivation and pasture. From Mr. Sinclair's house the silver bends of this fine stream gave exquisite peeps to the spectator as they wound out of the wood which here and there clothed its banks, occasionally dipping into the water. On the left, attached to the glebe-house of the Protestant pastor of the parish, the eye rested upon a pond smooth as a mirror, except where an occasional swan, as it floated onwards without any apparent effort, left here and there a slight quivering ripple behind it. Farther down, springing from between two clumps of trees, might be seen the span of a light and elegant arch, from under which the river gently wound away to the right; and beyond this, on the left, about a hundred yards from the bank, rose up the slender spire of the parish church, out of the bosom of the old beeches that overshadowed it, and threw a solemn gloom upon the peaceful graveyard at its side. About two hundred yards again to the right, in a little green shelving dell, beneath the house, stood Mr. Sinclair's modest white meeting-house, with a large ash tree hanging over each gable, and a row of poplars behind it. The valley at the opposite extremity opened upon a landscape bright and picturesque, dotted with those white residences which give that peculiar character of warmth and comfort for which the northern landscapes are so remarkable. Indeed the eye could scarcely rest

upon a richer expanse of country than lay stretched out before it, nor can we omit to notice the singularly unique and beautiful effect produced by the numerous bleach-greens that shone at various degrees of distance, and contrasted so sweetly with the surface of a land deeply and delightfully verdant.

In the far distance rose the sharp outlines of a lofty mountain, whose green and sloping base melted into the "sun-silvered" expanse of the sea, on the smooth bosom of which the eye could snatch brilliant glimpses of the snow-white sails that sparkled at a distance as they fell under the beams of the noonday sun. The landscape was indeed beautiful in itself, but still rendered more so by the delicate aerial tints which lay on every object, and touched the whole into a mellower and more exquisite expression.

Such was the happy valley in which this peaceful family resided; each and all enjoying that tranquillity which sheds its calm contentment over the unassuming spirits of those who are ignorant of the crimes that flow from the selfishness and ambition of busy life. To them, the fresh breezes of morning, as they rustled through the living foliage, and stirred the modest flowers of their pleasant path, were fraught with an enjoyment which bound their hearts to every object around them, because to each of them these objects were the sources of habitual gratification. On them the dewy stillness of evening descended with tender serenity, as the valley shone in the radiance of the sinking sun;



and by them was held that sweet and rapturous communion with nature, which, as it springs earliest in the affections so does it linger about the heart when all the other loves and enmities of life are forgotten. Who is there, indeed, whose spirit does not tremble with tenderness, on looking back upon the scenes of his early life? And, alas! alas! how few are there of those that are long conversant with the world, who can take such a retrospect without feeling their hearts weighed down by sorrow, and the force of associations too mournful to be uttered in words. The bitter consciousness that we can be youthful no more, and that the golden hours of our innocence have passed away for ever, throws a melancholy darkness over the soul, and sends it back again to retrace, in the imaginary light of our early time, the scenes where that innocence had been our playmate. Let no man deny that groves, and meadows, and green fields, and winding streams, and all the other charms of rural imagery, unconsciously but surely give to the human heart a deep perception of that graceful creed which is beautifully termed the religion of nature. They give purity and strength to feeling, and through the imagination, which owes so much of its power to their impressions, they raise our sentiments until we feel them kindled into union with the lustre of a holier light than even that which leads our steps to God through the beauty of his own works. For this reason it is, that all imaginative affections are much stronger in the country than in the town. Love in the one place

is not only freer from the coarseness of passion, but incomparably more seductive to the heart, and more voluptuous in its conception of the ideal beauty with which it invests the object of its attachment. Nor is this surprising. In the country its various associations are essentially impressive and poetical. Moonlight—evening—the still glen—the river side—the flowery hawthorn—the bower—the crystal well—not forgetting the melody of the woodland songster—are all calculated to make the heart and fancy surrender themselves to the blandishments of a passion that is surrounded by objects so sweetly linked to their earliest sympathies. But this is not all. In rural life, neither the heart nor the eye is distracted by the claims of rival beauty, when challenging, in the various graces of many, that admiration which might be bestowed on one alone, did not each successive impression efface that which went before it. In the country, therefore, in spring meadows, among summer groves, and beneath autumnal skies, most certainly does the passion of love sink deepest into the human heart, and pass into the greatest extremes of happiness or pain. Here is where it may be seen, cheek to cheek, now in all the shivering ecstasies of intense rapture, or again moping carelessly along, with pale brow and flashing eye, sometimes writhing in the agony of undying attachment, or chanting its mad lay of hope and love in a spirit of fearful happiness more affecting than either misery or despair.

Everything was beautiful in the history of unhappy Jane Sinclair's melancholy fate. The evening

of the incident to which the fair girl's misery might eventually be traced was one of the most calm and balmy that could be witnessed even during the leafy month of June. With the exception of Mrs. Sinclair, the whole family had gone out to saunter leisurely by the river side; the father between his two eldest daughters, and Jane, then sixteen, sometimes chatting to her brother William, and sometimes fondling a white dove, which she had petted and trained with such success, that it was then amenable to almost every light injunction she laid upon it. It sat upon her shoulder, which, indeed, was its usual seat, would peck her cheek, cower as if with a sense of happiness in her bosom, and put its bill to her lips, from which it was usually fed, either to demand some sweet reward for its obedience, or to express its attachment by a profusion of innocent caresses. The evening, as we said, was fine; not a cloud could be seen, except a pile of feathery flakes that hung far up at the western gate of heaven; the stillness was profound; no breathing even of the gentlest zephyr, could be felt; the river beside them, which was here pretty deep, seemed motionless; not a leaf of the trees stirred; the very aspens were still as if they had been marble; and the whole air was warm and fragrant. Although the sun wanted an hour of setting, yet from the bottom of the vale they could perceive the broad shafts of light which shot from his mild disk through the snowy clouds we have mentioned, like bars of lambent radiance, almost palpable to the touch. Yet, although this delightful silence was

so profound, the heart, could perceive, beneath its stillest depths, that voiceless harmony of progressing life, which, like the music of a dream, can reach the soul independently of the senses, and pour upon it a sublime sense of natural inspiration.

Something like this appears to have been felt by the group we have alluded to. Mr. Sinclair, after standing for a moment on the bank of the river, and raising his eyes to the solemn splendor of the declining sun, looked earnestly around him, and then out upon the glowing landscape that stretched beyond the valley, after which, with a spirit of high enthusiasm, he exclaimed, catching at the same time the fire and grandeur of the poet's noble conception—

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !  
Almighty ! thine this universal fame—  
Thus wondrous fair—thyself how wondrous then—  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these thy lowest works.

There was something singularly impressive in the burst of piety which the hour and the place drew from this venerable pastor, as indeed there was in the whole group, as they listened in the attitude of deep attention to his words. Mr. Sinclair was a tall, fine looking old man, whose white flowing locks fell down on each side of his neck. His figure appeared to fine advantage, as, standing a little in front of his children, he pointed with his raised arm to the setting sun; behind him stood his two eldest girls, the countenance of one turned with an expression of awe and admiration towards the

west; that of the other fixed with mingled reverence and affection on her father. William stood near Jane, and looked out thoughtfully towards the sea, while Jane herself, light and young and beautiful, stood with a hushed face, in the act of giving a pat of gentle rebuke to the snow-white dove on her bosom. At length they resumed their walk, and the conversation took a lighter turn. The girls left their father's side, and strolled in many directions through the meadow. Sometimes they pulled wild flowers, if marked by more than ordinary beauty, or gathered the wild mint and meadow-sweet to perfume their dairy, or culled the flowery woodbine to shed its delicate fragrance through their sleeping-rooms. In fact, all their habits and amusements were pastoral, and simple, and elegant. Jane accompanied them as they strolled about, but was principally engaged with her pet, which flew, in capricious but graceful circles over her head, and occasionally shot off into the air, sweeping in mimic flight behind a green knoll, or a clump of trees, completely out of her sight; after which it would again return, and folding its snowy pinions, drop affectionately upon her shoulder, or into her bosom. In this manner they proceeded for some time, when the dove again sped off across the river, the bank of which was wooded on the other side. Jane followed the beautiful creature with a sparkling eye, and saw it wheeling to return, when immediately the report of a gun was heard from the trees directly beneath it, and the next moment it faltered in its flight, sunk, and with feeble wing, struggled to



reach the object of its affection. This, however was beyond its strength. After sinking gradually towards the earth, it had power only to reach the middle of the river, into the deepest part of which it fell, and there lay fluttering upon the stream.

The report of the gun, and the fate of the pigeon, brought the personages of our little drama with hurrying steps to the edge of the river. One scream of surprise and distress proceeded from the lips of its fair young mistress, after which she wrung her hands, and wept and sobbed like one in absolute despair.

"Oh, dear William," she exclaimed, "can you not rescue it? Oh, save it—save it; if it sinks I will never see it more. Oh, papa, who could be so cruel, so heartless, as to injure a creature so beautiful and inoffensive?"

"I know not, my dear Jane; but cruel and heartless must the man be that could perpetrate a piece of such wanton mischief. I should rather think it is some idle boy who knows not that it is tame."

"William, dear William, can you not save it," she inquired again of her brother; "if it is doomed to die, let it die with *me*; but, alas! now it must sink, and I will never see it more;" and the affectionate girl continued to weep bitterly.

"Indeed, my dear Jane, I never regretted my ignorance of swimming so much as I do this moment. The truth is, I cannot swim a stroke, otherwise I would save poor little Ariel for your sake."

"Don't take it so much to heart, my dear child,"

said her father; "it is certainly a distressing incident, but, at the same time, your grief, girl, is too excessive; it is violent, and you know it ought *not* to be violent for the death of a favorite bird."

"Oh, papa, who can look upon its struggles for life, and not feel deeply; remember it was mine, and think of its attachment to me. It has not only the pain of its wound to suffer, but to struggle with an element against which it feels a natural antipathy, and with which the gentle creature is this moment contending for its life."

There was, indeed, something very painful and affecting in the situation of the beautiful wounded dove. Even Mr. Sinclair himself, in witnessing its unavailing struggles, felt as much; nor were the other two girls unaffected any more than Jane herself. Their eyes became filled with tears, and Maria, the eldest, said, "It is better Jane, to return home. Poor mute creature! the view of its sufferings is, indeed, very painful."

Just then a tall, slender youth, apparently about eighteen, came out of the trees on the other bank of the river, but on seeing Mr. Sinclair and his family, he paused, and appeared to feel somewhat embarrassed. It was evident that he had seen the bird wounded, and followed the course of its flight, without suspecting that it was tame, or that there was any person near to claim it. The distress of the females, however, especially of its mistress, immediately satisfied him that it was their's, and he was about to withdraw into the wood again, when the situation of poor Ariel caught his eye. He

instantly took off his hat, flung it across the river, and plunging in swam towards the dove, which was now nearly exhausted. A few strokes brought him to the spot, on reaching which, he caught the bird in one hand, held it above the water, and, with the other, swam down towards a slope in the bank a few yards below the spot where the party stood. Having gained the bank, he approached them, but was met half way by Jane, whose eyes, now sparkling through her tears, spoke her gratitude in language much more eloquent than any her tongue could utter.

The youth first examined the bird, with a view to ascertain where it had been wounded, and immediately placed it with much gentleness in the eager hands of its mistress.

"It will not die, I should think, in consequence of the wound," he observed, "which, though pretty severe, has left the wing unbroken. The body, at all events, is safe. With care it may recover."

William then handed him his hat and Mr. Sinclair having thanked him for an act of such humanity, insisted that he should go home with them, in order to procure a change of apparel. At first he declined this offer, but, after a little persuasion, he yielded with something of shyness and hesitation: accordingly, without loss of time, they all reached the house together.

Having, with some difficulty, been prevailed on to take a glass of cordial, he immediately withdrew to William's apartment, for the purpose of changing his dress. William, however, now observed that

he got pale, and that in a few minutes afterwards his teeth began to chatter, whilst he shivered excessively.

"You had better lose no time in putting these dry clothes on," said he; "I am rather inclined to think bathing does not agree with you, that is, if I am to judge by your present paleness and trembling."

"No," said the youth, "it is a pleasure which, for the last two years I have been forbidden. I feel very chilly, indeed, and you will excuse me for declining the use of your clothes. I must return home forthwith."

Young Sinclair, however, would not bear of this. After considerable pains he prevailed on him to change his dress, but no argument could induce him to stop a moment longer than until this was effected.

The family, on his entering the drawing-room to take his leave, were surprised at a determination so sudden and unexpected, but when Mr. Sinclair noticed his extreme paleness, he suspected that he had got ill, and that it might not be delicate to press him.

"Before you leave us," said the good clergyman, "will you not permit us to know the name of the young gentleman to whom my daughter is indebted for the rescue of her dove?"

"We are as yet but strangers in the neighborhood," replied the youth: "my father's name is Osborne. We have not been more than three days in Mr. Williams's residence, which, together with the

who e of the property annexed to it, my father has purchased."

"I am aware, I am aware: then you will be a permanent neighbor of ours," said Mr. Sinclair; "and believe me, my dear boy, we shall always be happy to see you at Springvale; nor shall we soon forget the generous act which first brought us acquainted.

Whilst this short dialogue lasted, two or three shy sidelong glances passed between him and Jane. So extremely modest was the young man that, from an apprehension lest these glances might have been noticed, his pale face became lit up with a faint blush, in which state of confusion he took his leave.

Conversation was not resumed among the Sinclairs for some minutes after his departure, each in fact, having been engaged in reflecting upon the surpassing beauty of his face, and the uncommon symmetry of his slender but elegant person. Their impression, indeed, was rather that of wonder than of mere admiration. The tall youth, who had just left them seemed, in fact, an incarnation of the beautiful itself—a visoinary creation, in which was embodied the ideal spirit of youth, intellect, and grace. His face shone with that rosy light of life's prime which only glows on the human countenance during the brief period that intervenes between the years of the thoughtless boy and those of the confirmed man: and whilst his white brow beamed with intellect, it was easy to perceive that the fire of deep feeling and high-wrought enthusiasm broke out in timid flashes from his dark eye. His modesty, too, by tempering the full lustre of his beauty, gave to

it a character of that graceful diffidence, which above all others makes the deepest impression upon a female heart.

"Well, I do think," said William Sinclair, "that young Osborne is decidedly the finest boy I ever saw—the most perfect in beauty and figure—and yet we have not seen him to advantage."

"I think, although I regretted to see him so, that he looked better after he got pale," said Maria; "his features, though colorleess, were cut like marble."

"I hope his health may not be injured by what has occurred," observed the second; "he appeared ill."

"That, Agnes, is more to the point, said Mr. Sinclair; "I fear the boy is by no means well; and I am apprehensive, from the deep carnation of his cheek, and his subsequent paleness, that he carries within him the seeds of early dissolution. He is too delicate, almost too ethereal for earth."

"If he becomes an angel," said William, smiling, "with a very slight change, he will put some of them out of countenance."

"William," said the father, "never, while you live attempt to be witty at the expense of what is sacred or solemn; such jests harden the hearts of him who utters them, and sink his character, not only as a Christian, but as a gentleman."

"I beg your pardon, father—I was wrong—but I spoke heedlessly."

"I know you did, Billy; but in future avoid it. Well, Jane, how is your bird?"

"I think it is better, papa; but one can form no opinion so soon."

"Go, show it to your mamma—she is the best doctor among us—follow her advice, and no doubt she will add its cure to the other triumphs of her skill."

"Jane is fretting too much about it," observed Agnes, "why, Jane, you are just now as pale as young Osborne himself."

This observation turned the eyes of the family upon her; but scarcely had her sister uttered the words when the young creature's countenance became the color of crimson, so deeply, and with such evident confusion did she blush. Indeed she felt conscious of this, for she rose, with the wounded dove lying gently between her hands and bosom, and passed, without speaking, out of the room.

"Don't you think, papa," observed Miss Sinclair, "that there is a striking resemblance between young Osborne and Jane? I could not help remarking it."

"There decidedly is, Maria, now that you mention it," said William.

The father paused a little, as if to consider the matter, and then added with a smile—

"It is very singular, Mary; but indeed I think there is—both in the style of their features and their figure."

"Osborne is too handsome for a man," observed Agnes; "yet, after all, one can hardly say so, his face, though fine, is not feminine."

"Beauty, my children!—alas, what is it? Often

—too often, a fearful, a fatal gift. It is born with us, and not of our own merit; yet we are vain enough to be proud of it. It is at best a flower that soon fades—a light that soon passes away. Oh! what is it when contrasted with those high principles whose beauty is immortal, which brighten by age, and know neither change nor decay. There is Jane—my poor child—she is indeed very beautiful and graceful, yet I often fear that her beauty, joined as it is to an over-wrought sensibility, may, before her life closes, occasion much sorrow either to herself or others.”

“She is all affection,” said William.

“She is all love, all tenderness, all goodness; and may the grace of her Almighty Father keep her from the wail and woe which too often accompany the path of beauty in this life of vicissitude and trial.”

A tear of affection for his beautiful child stood in the old man’s eyes as he raised them to heaven, and the loving hearts of his family burned with tenderness towards this their youngest and best beloved sister.

The sun had now gone down, and, after a short pause, the old man desired William to summon the other members of the household to prayers. The evening worship being concluded, the youngsters walked in the lawn before the door until darkness began to set in, after which they retired to their respective apartments for the night.

Sweet and light be your slumbers, O ye that are peaceful and good—sweet be your slumbers on this



night so calm and beautiful; for, alas! there is one among you into whose innocent bosom has stolen that destroying spirit which will yet pale her fair cheek, and wring many a bitter tear from the eyes that love to look upon her. Her early sorrows have commenced this night, and for what mysterious purpose who can divine?—but, alas, alas, her fate is sealed—the fawn of Springvale is stricken, and even now carries in her young heart a wound that will never close.

Osborne's father, who had succeeded to an estate of one thousand per annum, was the eldest son of a gentleman whose habits were badly calculated to improve the remnant of property which ancestral extravagance had left him.

Ere many years the fragment which came into his possession dwindled into a fraction of its former value, and he found himself with a wife and four children—two sons and two daughters—struggling on a pittance of two hundred a year. This, to a man possessing the feelings and education of a gentleman, amounted to something like retributive justice upon his prodigality. His conflict with poverty, however, (for to him it might be termed such,) was fortunately not of long duration. A younger brother who, finding that he must fight his own battle in life, had embraced the profession of medicine, very seasonably died, and Osborne's father succeeded to a sum of twelve thousand pounds in the funds, and an income in landed property of seven hundred per annum. He now felt himself more independent than he had ever been, and with

this advantage, that his bitter experience of a heartless world had completely cured him of all tendency to extravagance. And now he would have enjoyed as much happiness as is the usual lot of man, were it not that the shadow of death fell upon his house, and cast its cold blight upon his children. Ere three years had elapsed he saw his eldest daughter fade out of life, and in less than two more his eldest son was laid beside her in the same grave. Decline, the poetry of death, in its deadly beauty came upon them, and whilst it sang its song of life and hope to their hearts, treacherously withdrew them to darkness and the worm.

Osborne's feelings were those of thoughtlessness and extravagance; but he had never been either a libertine or a profligate, although the world forbore not when it found him humbled in his poverty, to bring such charges against him. In truth, he was full of kindness, and no parent ever loved his children with deeper or more devoted affection. The death of his noble son and beautiful girl brought down his spirit to the most mournful depths of affliction. Still he had two left, and, as it happened, the most beautiful, and more than equally possessed his affections. To them was gradually transferred that melancholy love which the heart of the sorrowing father had carried into the grave of the departed; and alas, it appeared as if it had come back to those who lived loaded with the malady of the dead. The health of the surviving boy became delicate, and by the advice of his physician, who pronounced the air in which they lived unfavorable,—

Osborne, on hearing that Mr. Williams, a distant relation, was about to dispose of his house and grounds, immediately became the purchaser. The situation, which had a southern aspect, was dry and healthy, the air pure and genial, and, according to the best medical opinions, highly beneficial to persons of a consumptive habit.

For two years before this—that is since his brother's death—the health of young Osborne had been watched with all the tender vigilance of affection. A regimen in diet, study and exercise, had been prescribed for him by his physician; the regulations of which he was by no means to transgress. In fact his parents lived under a sleepless dread of losing him which kept their hearts expanded with that inexpressible and burning love which none but a parent so circumstanced can ever feel. Alas! notwithstanding the promise of life which early years usually hold out, there was much to justify them in this their sad and gloomy apprehension. Woeful was the uncertainty which they felt in discriminating between the natural bloom of youth and the beauty of that fatal malady which they dreaded. His tall slender frame, his transparent cheek, so touching, so unearthly in the fairness of its expression; the delicacy of his whole organization, both mental and physical—all, all, with the terror of decline in their hearts, spoke as much of despair as of hope, and placed the life and death of their beloved boy in an equal poise.

But, independently of his extraordinary personal advantages, all his dispositions were so gentle and

affectionate, that it was not in human nature to entertain harsh feeling toward him. Although modest and shrinking, even to diffidence, he possessed a mind full of intellect and enthusiasm: his imagination, too, overflowed with creative power, and sought the dreamy solitudes of noon, that it might, far from the bustle of life, shadow forth those images of beauty which come thickly only upon those whose hearts are most susceptible of its forms. Many a time has he sat alone upon the brow of a rock or hill, watching the clouds of heaven, or gazing on the setting sun, or communing with the thousand aspects of nature in a thousand moods, his young spirit relaxed into that elysian reverie which, beyond all other kinds of intellectual enjoyment, is the most seductive to a youth of poetic temperament.

There were, indeed, in Osborne's case, too many of those light and scarcely perceptible tokens which might be traced, if not to a habit of decline, at least to a more than ordinary delicacy of constitution. The short cough, produced by the slightest damp, or the least breath of ungenial air—the varying cheek, now rich as purple, and again pale as a star of heaven—the unsteady pulse, and the nervous sense of uneasiness without a cause—all these might be symptoms of incipient decay, or proofs of those fine impulses which are generally associated with quick sensibility and genius. Still they existed; at one time oppressing the hearts of his parents with fear, and again exalting them with pride. The boy was consequently enjoined to avoid all violent ex-

ercise, to keep out of currents, while heated to drink nothing cold, and above all things never to indulge in the amusement of cold bathing.

Such were the circumstances under which Osborne first appeared to the reader, who may now understand the extent of his alarm on feeling himself so suddenly and seriously affected by his generosity in rescuing the wounded dove. His mere illness on this occasion was a matter of much less anxiety to himself than the alarm which he knew it would occasion his parents and his sister. On his reaching home he mentioned the incident which occurred, admitted that he had been rather warm on going into the water, and immediately went to bed. Medical aid was forthwith procured, and although the physician assured them that there appeared nothing serious in his immediate state, yet was his father's house a house of wail and sorrow.

The next day the Sinclairs, having heard in reply to their enquiries through the servant who had been sent home with his apparel, that he was ill, the worthy clergyman lost no time in paying his parents a visit on the occasion. In this he expressed his regret, and that also of his whole family, that any circumstance relating to them should have been the means, even accidentally, of affecting the young gentleman's health. It was not, however, until he dwelt upon the occurrence in terms of approbation, and placed the boy's conduct in a generous light, that he was enabled to appreciate the depth and tenderness of their affection for him. The mother's tears flowed in silence on hearing this fresh proof

of his amiable spirit, and the father, with a foreboding heart, related to Mr. Sinclair the substance of that which we have detailed to the reader.

Such was the incident which brought these two families acquainted, and ultimately ripened their intimacy into friendship.

Much sympathy was felt for young Osborne by the other members of Mr. Sinclair's household, especially as his modest and unobtrusive deportment, joined to his extraordinary beauty, had made so singularly favorable an impression upon them. Nor was the history of that insidious malady, which had already been so fatal to his sister and brother, calculated to lessen the interest which his first appearance had excited. There was one young heart among them which sank, as if the weight of death had come over it, on hearing this melancholy account of him whose image was now for ever the star of her fate, whether for happiness or sorrow. From the moment their eyes had met in those few shrinking but flashing glances by which the spirit of love conveys its own secret, she felt the first painful transports of the new affection, and retired to solitude with the arrow that struck her so deeply yet quivering in her bosom.

The case of our fair girl differed widely from that of many young persons, in whose heart the passion of love lurks unknown for a time, throwing its roseate shadows of delight and melancholy over their peace, whilst they themselves feel unable in the beginning to develope those strange sensations

which take away from their pillows the unbroken slumber of early life.

Jane from the moment her eyes rested on Osborne felt and was conscious of feeling the influence of a youth so transcendently fascinating. *Her* love broke not forth gradually like the trembling light that brightens into the purple flush of morning; neither was it fated to sink calm and untroubled like the crimson tints that die only when the veil of night, like the darkness of death, wraps them in its shadow. Alas no, it sprung from her heart in all the noontide strength of maturity—a full-grown passion, incapable of self-restraint, and conscious only of the wild and novel delight arising from its own indulgence. Night and day that graceful form hovered before her, encircled in the halo of her young imagination, with a lustre that sparkled beyond the light of human beauty. We know that the eye when it looks steadily upon a cloudless sun, is incapable for some time afterwards of seeing any other object distinctly; and that in whatever direction it turns that bright image floats incessantly before it—nor will be removed even although the eye itself is closed against its radiance. So was it with Jane. Asleep or awake, in society or in solitude, the vision with which her soul held communion never for a moment withdrew from before her, until at length her very heart became sick, and her fancy entranced, by the excess of her youthful and unrestrained attachment. She could not despair, she could scarcely doubt; for on thinking of the blushing glances so rapidly stolen at her—

self, and of the dark brilliant eye from whence they came, she knew that the soul of him she loved spoke to her in a language that was mutually understood. These impressions, it is true, were felt in her moments of ecstasy, but then came, notwithstanding this confidence, other moments when maidenly timidity took the crown of rejoicing off her head, and darkened her youthful brow with that uncertainty, which, while it depresses hope, renders the object that is loved a thousand times dearer to the heart.

To others, at the present stage of her affection, she appeared more silent than usual, and evidently fond of solitude, a trait which they had not observed in her before. But these were slight symptoms of what she felt; for alas, the day was soon to come that was to overshadow their hearts for ever. When never, never more were they and she, in the light of their own innocence, to sing like the morning stars together, or to lay their untroubled heads in the slumbers of the happy.

More than a month had now elapsed since the first appearance of Osborne as one of the dramatis personæ of our narrative. A slight fever, attended with less effect upon the lungs than his parents anticipated, had passed off, and he was once more able to go abroad and take exercise in the open air. The two families were now in the habit of visiting each other almost daily; and what tended more and more to draw closer the bonds of good feeling between them, was the fact of the Osbornes being members of the same creed, and attendants at Mr.



Sinclair's place of worship. Jane, while Charles Osborne was yet ill, had felt a childish diminution of her affection for her convalescent dove, whilst at the same time something whispered to her that it possessed a stronger interest in her heart than it had ever done before. This may seem a paradox to such of our readers as have never been in love; but it is not at all irreconcilable to the analagous and often conflicting states of feeling produced by that strange and mysterious passion. The innocent girl was wont, as frequently as she could without exciting notice, to steal away to the garden, or the fields, or the river side, accompanied by her mute companion, to which with pouting caresses she would address a series of rebukes of having been the means of occasioning the illness of him she loved.

"Alas, Ariel, little do you know, sweet bird, what anxiety you have caused your mistress—if *he* dies I shall never love you more? Yes, coo, and flutter—but I do not care for you; no, that kiss won't satisfy me until he is recovered—then I shall be friends with you, and you shall be my own Ariel again."

She would then pat it petulantly; and the beautiful creature would sink its head, and slightly expand its wings, as if conscious that there was a change of mood in her affection.

But again the innocent remorse of her girlish heart would flow forth in terms of tenderness and endearment; again would she pat and cherish it; and with the artless caprice of childhood exclaim—

"No, my own Ariel, the fault was not yours; come, I shall love you—and I will not be angry again; even if you were not good I would love you for *his* sake. You are now dearer to me a thousand times than you ever were; but alas! Ariel, I am sick, I am sick, and no longer happy. Where is my lightness of heart, my sweet bird, and where, oh where is the joy I used to feel?"

Even this admission, which in the midst of solitude could reach no other human ear, would startle the bashful creature into alarm; and whilst her cheek became alternately pale and crimson at such an avowal thus uttered aloud, she would wipe away the tears that arose to her eyes whenever the depths of her affection were stirred by those pensive broodings which gave its sweetest charm to youthful love.

In thus seeking solitude, it is not to be imagined that our young heroine was drawn thither by a love of contemplating nature in those fresher aspects which present themselves in the stillness of her remote recesses. She sought not for their own sakes the shades of the grove, the murmuring cascade, nor the voice of the hidden rivulet that occasionally stole out from its leafy cover, and ran in music towards the ampler stream of the valley.

No, no; over *her* heart and eye the spirit of their beauty passed idly and unfelt. All of external life that she had been wont to love and admire gave her pleasure no more. The natural arbors of woodbine, the fairy dells, and the wild flowers that peeped in unknown sweetness about the

hedges, the fairy fingers, the blue-bells, the cow-slips, with many others of her fragrant and graceful favorites, all, all, charmed her, alas, no more. Nor at home, where every voice was tenderness, and every word affection, did there exist in her stricken heart that buoyant sense of enjoyment which had made her youth like the music of a brook, where every thing that broke the smoothness of its current only turned it into melody. The morning and evening prayer—the hymn of her sister voices—their simple spirit of tranquil devotion—and the touching solemnity of her father worshipping God upon the altar of his own heart—all, all this, alas—alas, charmed her no more. Oh, no—no; many motives conspired to send her into solitude, that she might in the sanctity of unreproving nature cherish her affection for the youth whose image was ever, ever before her. At home such was the timid delicacy of her love, that she felt as if its indulgence even in the stillest depths of her own heart, was disturbed by the conversation of her kindred, and the familiar habits of domestic life. Her father's, her brother's, and her sister's voices, produced in her a feeling of latent shame, which, when she supposed for a moment that they could guess her attachment, filled her with anxiety and confusion. She experienced besides a sense of uneasiness on reflecting that she practiced, for the first time in their presence, a dissimulation so much at variance with the opinion she knew they entertained of her habitual candor. It was, in fact, the first secret she had ever con-

sealed from them; and now the suppression of it in her own bosom, made her feel as if she had withdrawn that confidence which was due to the love they bore her. This was what kept her so much in her own room, or sent her abroad to avoid all that had a tendency to repress the indulgence of an attachment that had left in her heart a capacity for no other enjoyment. But in solitude she was far from every thing that could disturb those dreams in which the tranquility of nature never failed to entrance her. There was where the mysterious spirit that raises the soul above the impulses of animal life, mingled with her being, and poured upon her affection the elemental purity of that original love which in the beginning preceded human guilt.

It is, indeed, far from the contamination of society—in the stillness of solitude when the sentiment of love comes abroad before its passion, that the heart can be said to realize the object of its devotion, and to forget that its indulgence can ever be associated with error. This is, truly, the angelic love of youth and innocence; and such was the nature of that which the beautiful girl felt. Inded, her clay was so divinely tempered, that the veil which covered her pure and ethereal spirit, almost permitted the light within to be visible, and exhibited the workings of a soul that struggled to reach the object whose communion with itself seemed to constitute the sole end of its existence.

The evening on which Jane and Charles Osborne met for the first time, unaccompanied by their

friends, was one of those to which the power of neither pen nor pencil can do justice. The sun was slowly sinking among a pile of those soft crimson clouds, behind which fancy is so apt to picture to itself the regions of calm delight that are inhabited by the happy spirits of the blest; the sycamore and hawthorn were yet musical with the hum of bees, busy in securing their evening burthen for the hive. Myriads of winged insects were sporting in the sunbeams; the melancholy plaint of the ring-dove came out sweetly from the trees, mingled with the songs of other birds, and the still sweeter voice of some happy groups of children at play in the distance. The light of the hour, in its subdued but golden tone, fell with singular clearness upon all nature, giving to it that tranquil beauty which makes every thing the eye rests upon glide with quiet rapture into the heart. The moth butterflies were fluttering over the meadows, and from the low stretches of softer green rose the thickly-growing grass-stalks, having their slender ears bent with the mellow burthen of wild honey—the ambrosial feast for the lips of innocence and childhood. It was, indeed, an evening when love would bring forth its sweetest memories, and dream itself into those ecstasies of tenderness that flow from the mingled sensations of sadness and delight.

It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to see on this earth a young creature, whose youth and beauty, and slender grace of person gave her more the appearance of some visionary spirit, too exquisitely ideal for human life. Indeed, she seemed

to be tinted with the hues of heaven, and never did a mortal being exist in such fine and harmonious keeping with the scene in which she moved. So light and sylph-like was her figure, though tall, that the eye almost feared she would dissolve from before it, and leave nothing to gaze at but the earth on which she trod. Yet was there still apparent in her something that preserved, with singular power, the delightful reality that she was of humanity, and subject to all those softer influences that breathe their music so sweetly over the chords of the human heart. The delicate bloom of her cheek, shaded away as it was, until it melted into the light that sparkled from her complexion—the snowy forehead, the flashing eye, in which sat the very soul of love—the lips, blushing of sweets—her whole person breathing the warmth of youth, and feeling, and so characteristic in the easiness of its motions of that gracile flexibility that has never been known to exist separate from the power of receiving varied and profound emotions—all this told the spectator, too truly, that the lovely being before him was not of another sphere, but one of the most delightful that ever appeared in this.

But hush!—here is a strain of music! Oh! what lips breathe forth that gush of touching melody which flows in such linked sweetness from the flute of an unseen performer? How soft, how gentle, but oh, how very mournful are the notes! Alas! they are steeped in sorrow, and melt away in the plaintive cadences of despair, until they mingle with silence. Surely, surely, they come from one whose

heart has been brought low by the ruined hopes of an unrequited passion. Yes, fair girl, thou at least dost so interperet them; but why this sympathy in one so young? Why is thy bright eye dewy with tears for the imaginary sorrows of another? And again—but ha!—why that flash of delight and terror?—that sudden suffusion of red over thy face and neck—and even now, that paleness like death! Thy heart, thy heart!—why does it throb, and why do thy knees totter? Alas! it is even so; he, the Endymion of thy dreams, as beautiful as even thou thyself in thy purple dawn of womanhood,—he from whom thou now shrinkest, yet whom thou darest not to meet, is approaching, and bears in his beauty the charm that will darken thy destiny.

The appearance of Osborne, unaccompanied, taught this young creature to know the full extent of his influence over her. Delight, terror, and utter confusion of thought and feeling, seized upon her the moment he became visible. She wished herself at home, but had not power to go; she blushed, she trembled, and, in the tumult of the moment, lost all presence of mind and self-possession. He had come from behind a hedge, on the path-way along which she walked, and was consequently approaching her, so that it was evident they must meet. On seeing her he ceased to play, paused a moment, and were it not that it might appear cold, and rather remarkable, he, too, would have retraced his steps homewards. In truth, both felt equally confused and equally agitated, for, although such an interview had been, for some time previously,

the dearest wish of their hearts, yet would they both almost have felt relieved, had they had an opportunity of then escaping it. Their first words were uttered in a low, hesitating voice, amid pauses occasioned by the necessity of collecting their scattered thoughts, and with countenances deeply blushing from a consciousness of what they felt. Osborne turned back, mechanically, and accompanied her in her walk. After this there was a silence for some time, for neither had courage to renew the conversation. At length Osborne, in a faltering voice, addressed her.

"Your dove," said he, "is quite recovered, I presume."

"Oh, yes," she replied, "it is perfectly well again."

"It is an exceedingly beautiful bird, and remarkably docile."

"I have had little difficulty in training it," she returned, and then added, very timidly, "it is also very affectionate."

The youth's eyes sparkled, as if he were about to indulge in some observation suggested by her reply, but, fearing to give it expression, he paused again; in a few minutes, however, he added—

"I think there is nothing that gives one so perfect an idea of purity and innocence as a snow-white dove, unless I except a young and beautiful girl, such as"—

He glanced at her as he spoke, and their eyes met, but in less than a moment they were withdrawn, and cast upon the earth.



"And of meekness and holiness too," she observed, after a little.

"True; but perhaps I ought to make another exception," he added, alluding to the term by which she herself was then generally known. As he spoke, his voice expressed considerable hesitation.

"Another exception," she answered, enquiringly, "it would be difficult, I think, to find any other emblem of innocence so appropriate as a dove."

"Is not a *Fawn* still more so," he replied, "it is so gentle, and meek, and its motions are so full of grace and timidity, and beauty. Indeed I do not wonder, when a individual of your sex resembles it in the qualities I have mentioned, that the name is sometimes applied to her."

The tell-tale cheek of the girl blushed a recognition of the compliment implied in the words, and after a short silence, she said, in a tone that was any thing but indifferent, and with a view of changing the conversation—

"I hope you are quite recovered from your illness."

"With the exception of a very slight cough, I am," replied.

"I think," she observed, "that you look somewhat paler than you did."

"That paleness does not proceed from indisposition, but from a far different"—he paused again, and looked evidently abashed. In the course of a minute, however, he added, "yes, I know I am pale, but not because I am unwell, for my health is nearly,

if not altogether, restored, but because I am unhappy."

"Strange," said Jane, "to see one unhappy at your years."

"I think I know my own character and disposition well," he replied; "my temperament is naturally a melancholy one; the frame of my mind is like that of my body, very delicate, and capable of being affected by a thousand slight influences which pass over hearts of a stronger mould, without ever being felt. Life to me, I know, will be productive of much pain, and much enjoyment, while its tenure lasts, but that, indeed, will not be long. My sands are measured, for I feel a presentiment, a mournful and prophetic impression, that I am doomed to go down into an early grave."

The tone of passionate enthusiasm which pervaded these words, uttered as they were in a voice wherein pathos and melody were equally blended, appeared to be almost too much for a creature whose sympathy in all his moods and feelings was then so deep and congenial. She felt some difficulty in repressing her tears, and said, in a voice which no effort could keep firm,

"You ought not to indulge in those gloomy forebodings; you should struggle against them, otherwise they will distress your mind, and injure your health."

"Oh, you do not know," he proceeded, his eyes sparkling with that light which is so often the beacon of death—"you do not know the fatal fascination by which a mind, set to the sorrows of a

melancholy temperament, is charmed out of its strength. But no matter how dark may be my dreams—there is one light for ever upon them—one image ever, ever before me—one figure of grace and beauty—oh, how could I deny myself the contemplation of a vision that pours into my soul a portion of itself, and effaces every other object but an entrancing sense of its own presence. I cannot, I cannot—it bears me away into a happiness that is full of sadness—where I indulge alone, without knowing why, in “my feast of tears”—happy! happy! so I think, and so I feel; yet why is my heart sunk, and why are all my visions filled with death and the grave?”

“Oh, do not talk so frequently of death,” replied the beautiful girl, “surely you need not fear it for a long while. This morbid tone of mind will pass away when you grow into better health and strength.”

“Is not this hour calm?” said he, flashing his dark eyes full upon her, “see how beautiful the sun sinks in the west;—alas! so I should wish to die—as calm, and the moral lustre of my life as radiant.”

“And so you shall,” said Jane, in a voice full of that delightful spirit of consolation which, proceeding from such lips, breathes the most affecting power of sympathy, “so you shall, but like him, not until after the close of a long and well-spent life.”

“That—that,” said he, “was only a passing thought. Yes, the hour is calm, but even in such stillness, do you not observe that the aspen there

so our left, this moment quivers to the breezes which we cannot feel, and by which not a leaf of any other tree about us is stirred—such I know myself to be, an aspen among men, stirred into joy or sorrow, whilst the hearts of others are at rest. Oh, how can my foretaste of life be either bright or cheerful, for when I am capable of being moved by the very breathings of passion, what must I not feel in the blast, and in the storm—even now, even now!”—The boy, here overcome by the force of his own melancholy enthusiasm, paused abruptly, and Jane, after several attempts to speak, at last said, in a voice scarcely audible—

“Is not *hope* always better than despair?”

Osborne instantly fixed his eyes upon her, and saw, that although her's were bent upon the earth, her face had become overspread with a deep blush. While he looked she raised them, but after a single glance, at once quick and timid, she withdrew them again, a still deeper blush mantling on her cheek. He now felt a sudden thrill of rapture fall upon his heart, and rush, almost like a suffocating sensation, to his throat; his being became for a moment raised to an ecstasy too intense for the power of description to portray, and, were it not for the fear which ever accompanies the disclosure of first and youthful love, the tears of exulting delight would have streamed down his cheeks.

Both had reached a little fairy dell of vivid green, concealed by trees on every side, and in the middle of which rose a large yew, around whose trunk had been built a seat of natural turf where

on those who strolled about the ground might rest, when heated or fatigued by exercise or the sun. Here the girl sat down.

A change had now come over both. The gloom of the boy's temperament was gone, and his spirit caught its mood from that of his companion. Each at the moment breathed the low, anxious, and tender timidity of love, in its purest character. The souls of both vibrated to each other, and felt depressed with that sweetest emotion which derives all its power from the consciousness that its participation is mutual. Osborne spoke low, and his voice trembled; the girl was silent, but her bosom panted, and her frame shook from head to foot. At length Osborne spoke.

"I sometimes sit here alone, and amuse myself with my flute; but of late—of late—I can hear no music that is not melancholy."

"I, too, prefer mournful—mournful music," replied Jane. "That was a beautiful air you played just now."

Osborne put the flute to his lips, and commenced playing over again the air she had praised; but, on glancing at the fair girl, he perceived her eyes fixed upon him with a look of such deep and devoted passion as utterly overcame him. Her eyes, as before, were immediately withdrawn, but there dwelt again upon her burning cheek such a consciousness of her love as could not, for a moment, be mistaken. In fact she betrayed all the confused symptoms of one who felt that the state of her heart had been discovered. Osborne ceased

playing; for such was his agitation that he scarcely knew what he thought or did.

"I cannot go on," said he in a voice which equally betrayed the state of his heart; "I cannot play;" and at the same time he seated himself beside her.

Jane rose as he spoke, and in a broken voice, full of an expression like distress, said hastily:

"It is time I should go;—I am,—I am too long out."

Osborne caught her hand, and in words that burned with the deep and melting contagion of his passion, said simply:

"Do not go:—oh do not *yet* go!"

She looked full upon him, and perceived that as he spoke his face became deadly pale, as if her words were to seal his happiness or misery.

"Oh do not leave me now," he pleaded; "do not go, and my life may yet be happy."

"I must," she replied, with great difficulty; "I cannot say: I do not wish you to be unhappy;" and whilst saying this, the tears that ran in silence down her cheeks proved too clearly how dear his happiness must ever be to her.

Osborne's arm glided round her waist, and she resumed her seat,—or rather tottered into it.

"You are in tears," he exclaimed. "Oh could it be true! Is it not, my beloved girl? It is—it is—*love!* Oh surely, surely it must—it must!"

She sobbed aloud once or twice; and, as he kissed her unresisting lips, she murmured out, "It is; it is; I love you."

Oh life! how dark and unfathomable are thy mysteries! And why is it that thou permittest the course of true love, like this, so seldom to run smooth, when so many who, uniting through the impulses of sordid passion, sink into a state of obtuse indifference, over which the lights and shadows that touch thee into thy finest perceptions of enjoyment pass in vain.

It is a singular fact, but no less true than singular, that since the world began there never was known any instance of an anxiety, on the part of youthful lovers, to prolong to an immoderate extent, the scene in which the first mutual avowal of their passion takes place. The excitement is too profound, and the waste of those delicate spirits, which are expended in such interviews, is much too great to permit the soul to bear such an excess of happiness long. Independently of this, there is associated with it an ultimate enjoyment, for which the lovers immediately fly to solitude; there, in the certainty of waking bliss, to think over and over again of all that has occurred between them, and to luxuriate in the conviction, that at length the heart has not another wish, but sinks into the solitary charm which expands it with such a sense of rapturous and exulting delight.

The interview between our lovers was, consequently, not long. The secret of their hearts being now known, each felt anxious to retire, and to look with a miser's ecstacy upon the delicious hoard which the scene we have just described had creat-

ed. Jane did not reach home until the evening devotions of the family were over, and this was the first time she had ever, to their knowledge, been absent from them before. Borne away by the force of what had just occurred, she was proceeding up to her own room, after reaching home, when Mr. Sinclair, who had remarked her absence, desired that she be called into the drawing-room.

"It is the first neglect," he observed, "of a necessary duty, and it would be wrong in me to let it pass without at least pointing it out to the dear child as an error, and knowing from her own lips why it has happened."

Terror and alarm, like what might be supposed to arise from the detection of secret guilt, seized upon the young creature so violently that she had hardly strength to enter the drawing-room without support: her face became the image of death, and her whole frame tottered and trembled visibly.

"Jane, my dear, why were you absent from prayers this evening?" inquired her father, with his usual mildness of manner.

This question, to one who had never yet been, in the slightest instance, guilty of falsehood, was indeed a terrible one; and especially to a girl so extremely timid as was this his best beloved daughter.

"Papa," she at last replied, "I was out walking;" but as she spoke there was that in her voice and manner which betrayed the guilt of an insincere reply.



"I know, my dear, you were; but although you have frequently been out walking, yet I do not remember that you ever stayed away from our evening worship before. Why is this?"

Her father's question was repeated in vain. She hung her head and returned no answer. She tried to speak, but from her parched lips not a word could proceed. She felt as if all the family that moment were conscious of the occurrence between her and her lover; and if the wish could have relieved her, she would almost have wished to die, so much did she shrink abashed in their presence.

"Tell me, my daughter," proceeded her father, more seriously, "has your absence been occasioned by anything that you are ashamed or afraid to mention? From me, Jane, you ought to have no secrets;—you are yet too young to think away from your father's heart and from your mother's also;—speak candidly, my child,—speak candidly,—I expect it."

As he uttered the last words, the head of their beautiful flower sank upon her bosom, and in a moment she lay insensible upon the sofa on which she had been sitting.

This was a shock for which neither the father nor the family were prepared. William flew to her, —all of them crowded about her, and scarcely had he raised that face so pale, but now so mournfully beautiful in its insensibility, when her mother and sisters burst into tears and wailings, for they feared at the moment that their beloved one must have

been previously seized with sudden illness, and was then either taken, or about to be taken from their eyes for ever. By the coolness of her father, however, they were directed how to restore her, in which, after a lapse of not less than ten minutes, they succeeded.

When she recovered, her mother folded her in her arms, and her sisters embraced her with tenderness and tears. Her father then gently caught her hand in his, and said with much affection:

"Jane, my child, you are ill. Why not have told us so?"

The beautiful girl knelt before him for a moment, but again rose up, and hiding her head in his bosom, exclaimed—weeping—

"Papa, bless me, oh, bless me, and *forgive* me."

"I do; I do;" said the old man; and as he spoke a few large tears trickled down his cheeks, and fell upon her golden locks.



## PART II.

It is a singular fact, but one which we know to be true, that not only the affection of parents, but that of brothers and sisters, goes down with greater tenderness to the youngest of the family, all other circumstances being equal. This is so universally felt and known, that it requires no further illustration from us. At home, Jane Sinclair was loved more devotedly in consequence of being the most innocent and beautiful of her father's children; in addition to this, however, she was cherished with that peculiar sensibility of attachment by which the human heart is always swayed towards its youngest and its last.

On witnessing her father's tenderness, she concealed her face in his bosom, and wept for some time in silence, and by a gentle pressure of her delicate arms, as they encircled his neck, intimated her sense of his affectionate indulgence towards her; and perhaps could it have been understood, a tacit acknowledgement of her own unworthiness on that occasion to receive it.

At length, she said, after an effort to suppress her tears, "Papa, I will go to bed."

"Do, my love; and Jane, forget not to address the Throne of God before you sleep."

"I did not intend to neglect it, papa. Mamma, come with me." She then kissed her sisters and

bade good night to William; after which she withdrew, accompanied by her mother, whilst the eyes of those who remained were fixed upon her with love, and pride and admiration.

"Mamma," said she, when they reached the apartment, "allow me to sleep alone to-night."

"Jane, your mind appears to be depressed, darling," replied her mother; "has any thing disturbed you, or are you really ill?"

"I am quite well, mamma, and not at all depressed; but do allow me to sleep in the closet bed."

"No, my dear, Agnes will sleep there, and you can sleep in your own as usual; the poor girl will wonder why you leave her, Jane; she will feel so lonely, too."

"But, mamma, it would gratify me very much, at least for *this* night. I never wished to sleep away from Agnes before; and I am certain she will excuse me when she knows I prefer it."

"Well, my love, of course I can have no objection; I only fear you are not so well as you imagine yourself. At all events, Jane, remember your father's advice to pray to God; and remember this, besides, that from me at least, you ought to have no secrets. Good night, dear, and may the Lord take care of you!"

She then kissed her with an emotion of sorrow for which she could scarcely account, and passed down to the room wherein the other members of the family were assembled.

"I know not what is wrong with her," she observed, in reply to their enquiries. "She declares

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and please the Divine Will, all will again be well—but what's the matter with *you*, Agnes?"

Mr. Sinclair had, a moment before, observed that an expression of thought, blended with sorrow, overshadowed the face of his second daughter. The girl, on hearing her father's enquiry, looked mournfully upon him, whilst the tears ran silently down her cheeks.

"I will go to her," said she, "and stay with her if she lets me. Oh, papa, why talk of an early grave for *her*? How could we lose her? I could not—and I cannot bear even to think of it."

She instantly rose and proceeded to Jane's room, but in a few minutes returned, saying, "I found her at prayers, papa."

"God bless her, God bless her! I knew she would not voluntarily neglect so sacred a duty. As she wishes to be alone, it is better not to disturb her; solitude and quiet will no doubt contribute to her composure, and it is probably for this purpose that she wishes to be left to herself."

After this the family soon retired to bed, with the exception of Mr. Sinclair himself, who, contrary to his practice, remained for a considerable time longer up than usual. It appeared, indeed, as if the shadow of some coming calamity had fallen upon their hearts, or that the affection they had entertained for her was so mysteriously deep as to produce that prophetic sympathy which is often known to operate in a presentiment of sorrow that never fails to be followed by disaster. It is difficult to account for this singular succession of cause to

effect, as they act upon our emotions, except probably by supposing that it is an unconscious development of those latent faculties which are decreed to expand into a full growth in a future state of existence. Be this as it may, these loving relatives experienced upon that night a mood of mind such as they had never before known, even when the hand of death had taken a brother and sister from among them. It was not grief but a wild kind of dread, slight it is true, but distinct in its character, and not dissimilar to that fear which falls upon the spirits during one of those glooms that precede some dark and awful convulsion of nature. Her father remained up, as we have said, longer than the rest, and in the silence which succeeded their retirement for the night, his voice could be occasionally heard in deep and earnest supplication. It was evident that he had recourse to prayer; and by some of the expressions caught from time to time, they gathered that "his dear child," and "her peace of mind" were the object of the foreboding father's devotions.

Jane's distress, at concealing the cause of her absence from prayers, though acute at the moment of enquiry, was nevertheless more transient than one might suppose from the alarming effects it produced. Her mind was at the time in a state of tumult and excitement, such as she had never till then experienced, and the novel guilt of dissimulation, by superinducing her first impression of deliberate crime, opposed itself so powerfully to the exulting sense of her newborn happiness, that

both produced a shock of conflicting emotions which a young mind, already so much exhausted, could not resist. She felt, therefore, that a strange darkness shrouded her intellect, in which all distinct traces of thought, and all memory of the past were momentarily lost. Her frame, too, at the best but slender and much enfeebled by the preceding interview with Osborne, and her present embarrassment, could not bear up against this chaotic struggle between delight and pain. It was, no doubt, impossible for her relatives to comprehend all this, and hence their alarm. She was too pure and artless to be suspected of concealing the truth; and they consequently entertained not the slightest suspicion of that kind; but still their affections were aroused, and what might have terminated in an ordinary manner, ended in that unusual mood we have described.

With a scrupulous attention to her father's precept, as well as from a principle of early and sincere piety, she strove on reaching her bedroom to compose her mind in prayer, and to beg the pardon of Heaven for her wilful suppression of the truth. This was a task, however, to which she was altogether unequal. In vain she uttered words expressive of her sorrow, and gave language to sentiments of deep repentance; there was but one idea, but one image in her mind, viz.: her beautiful boy, and the certainty that she was the object of his love. Again and again she attempted to pray, but still with the same success. It was to no purpose that she resolved



to banish him from her thoughts, until at least the solemn act of her evening worship should be concluded; for ere she had uttered half a sentence the image would return, as if absolutely to mock her devotions. In this manner she continued for some time, striving to advance with a sincere heart in her address to heaven; again recommencing with a similar purpose, and as often losing herself in those visions that wrapped her spirit in their transports. At length she arose, and for a moment felt a deep awe fall upon her. The idea that she could not pray, seemed to her as a punishment annexed by God to her crime of having tampered with the love of truth, and disregarded her father's injunctions not to violate it. But this, also, soon passed away: she lay down, and at once surrendered her heart and thought and fancy to the power of that passion, which, like the jealous tyrant of the East, seemed on this occasion resolved to bear no virtue near the heart in which it sat enthroned. Such, however, was not its character, as the reader will learn when he proceeds; true love being in our opinion rather the guardian of the other virtues than their foe.

The next morning, when Jane awoke, the event of yesterday flashed on her memory with a thrill of pleasure that made her start up in a recumbent posture in the bed. Her heart bounded, her pulse beat high, and a sudden sensation of hysterical delight rushed to her throat with a transport that would have been painful, did she not pass out of a state of such panting ecstasy and become dissolved

in tears. She wept, but how far did she believe the cause of her emotion to be removed from sorrow? She wept, yet alas! alas! never did tears of such delight flow from a source that drew a young heart onward to greater darkness and desolation. Weep on, fair girl, in thy happiness; for the day will come when thou wilt not be able to find one tear in thy misery!

Her appearance the next morning exhibited to the family no symptoms of illness. On the contrary, she never looked better, indeed seldom so well. Her complexion was clearer than usual, her spirit more animated, and the dancing light of her eye plainly intimated by its sparkling that her young heart was going on the way of its love rejoicing. Her family were agreeably surprised at this, especially when they reflected upon their anxiety concerning her on the preceding night. To her distress on that occasion they made not the slightest allusion; they felt it sufficient that the beloved of their hearts was well, and that from the evident flow of her spirits there existed no rational grounds for any apprehension respecting her. After breakfast she sat sewing for some time with her sisters, but it was evident that her mind was not yet sufficiently calm to permit her as formerly to sustain a proper part in their conversation. Ever and anon they could observe by the singular light which sparkled in her eyes, as with a sudden rush of joy, that her mind was engaged on some other topic, and this at a moment when some appeal or interrogatory to herself rendered ap- ab

stracted enjoyment more obvious. Sensible, therefore, of her incompetency as yet to regulate her imagination so as to escape notice, she withdrew in about an hour to her own room, there once more to give aloose to indulgence.

Our readers may perceive that the position of Jane Sinclair, in her own family, was not very favorable to the formation of a firm character. The regulation of a mind so imaginative, and of feelings so lively and susceptible, required a hand of uncommon skill and delicacy. Indeed her case was one of unusual difficulty. In the first place, her meekness and extreme sweetness of temper rendered it almost impossible in a family where her own qualities predominated, to find any deviation from duty which might be seized upon without harshness as a pretext for inculcating those precautionary principles that were calculated to strengthen the weak points which her character may have presented. Even those weak points, if at the time they could be so termed, were perceptible only in the exercise of her virtues, so that it was a matter of some risk, especially in the case of one so young, to reprove an excess on the right side, lest in doing so you checked the influence of the virtue that accompanied it. Such errors, if they can be called so, when occurring in the conduct of those whom we love, are likely to call forth any thing but censure. It is naturally supposed, and in general with too much truth, that time and experience will remove the excess, and leave the virtue not more than equal to the demands of life upon it.

Her father, however, was, as the reader may have found, by no means ignorant of those traits in the constitution of her mind from which danger or happiness might ultimately be apprehended; neither did he look on them with indifference. In truth, they troubled him much, and on more than one occasion he scrupled not fully to express his fears of their result. It was he, the reader perceives, who, on the evening of her first interview with Osborne, gave so gloomy a tone to the feelings of the family, and impressed them at all events more deeply than they otherwise would have felt, with a vague presentiment of some unknown evil that was to befall her. She was, however, what is termed, the *pet* of the family, the centre to which all their affections turned; and as she herself felt conscious of this, there is little doubt that the extreme indulgence, and almost blameable tenderness which they exercised towards her, did by imperceptible degrees disqualify her from undergoing with firmness those conflicts of the heart, to which a susceptibility of the finer emotions rendered her peculiarly liable. Indeed among the various errors prevalent in domestic life, there is scarcely one that has occasioned more melancholy consequences than that of carrying indulgence towards a favorite child too far; and creating, under the slightest instances of self-denial a sensitiveness or impatience, arising from a previous habit of being gratified in all the whims and caprices of childhood or youth. The fate of favorite children in life is almost proverbially unhappy, and we doubt not that if the various

lunatic receptacles were examined, the malady, in a majority of cases, might be traced to an excess of indulgence and want of proper discipline in early life. Had Mr. Sinclair insisted on knowing from his daughter's lips the cause of her absence from prayers, and given a high moral proof of the affection he bore her, it is probable that the consciousness on her part of his being cognizant of her passion, would have kept it so far within bounds as to submit to the control of reason instead of ultimately subverting it. This, however, he unhappily omitted to do, not because he was at all ignorant that a strict sense of duty, and a due regard for his daughter's welfare, demanded it; but because her distress, and the childlike simplicity with which she cast herself upon his bosom, touched his spirit, and drew forth all the affection of a parent who "loved not wisely but too well."

Let not my readers, however, condemn him too harshly for this, for alas, he paid, in the bitterness of a father's misery, a woeful and mysterious penalty of a father's weakness. His beloved one went before, and the old man could not remain behind her; but their sorrows have passed away, and both now enjoy that peace, which, for the last few years of their lives, the world did not give them.

From this time forth Jane's ear listened only to the music of a happy heart, and her eye saw nothing but the beauty of that vision which shone in her pure bosom like the star of evening in some limpid current that glides smoothly between rustic

meadows, on whose green banks the heart is charmed into happiness by the distant hum of pastoral life.

Love, however, will not be long without its object, nor can the soul be happy in the absence of its counterpart. For some time after the interview in which the passion of our young lovers was revealed, Jane found solitude to be the same solace to her love, that human sympathy is to affliction. The certainty that she was now beloved, caused her heart to lapse into those alternations of repose and enjoyment which above all other states of feeling nourish its affections. Indeed the change was surprising which she felt within her and around her. On looking back, all that portion of her life that had passed before her attachment to Osborne, seemed dark and without any definite purpose. She wondered at it as at a mystery which she could not solve; it was only now that she lived; her existence commenced, she thought, with her passion, and with it only she was satisfied it could cease. Nature wore in her eyes a new aspect, was clothed with such beauty, and breathed such a spirit of love and harmony, as she only perceived now for the first time. Her parents were kinder and better she thought than they had before appeared to her, and her sisters and brother seemed endued with warmer affections and brighter virtues than they had ever possessed. Every thing near her and about her partook in a more especial manner of this delightful change; the servants were won by sweetness so irresistible—the dogs were more kindly caressed,

and Ariel—her own Ariel was, if possible, more beloved.

Oh why—why is not love so pure and exalted as this more characteristic of human attachments? And why is it that affection, as exhibited in general life, is so rarely seen unstained by the tint of some darker passion? Love on, fair girl—love on in thy purity and innocence! The beauty that thou seest in nature, and the music it sends forth, exist only in thy own heart, and the light which plays around thee like a glory, is only the reflection of that image whose lustre has taken away the shadows from thy spirit!

In the mean time the heart, as we said, will, after the repose which must follow excitement, necessarily move towards that object in which it seeks its ultimate enjoyment. A week had now elapsed, and Jane began to feel troubled by the absence of her lover. Her eye wished once more to feast upon his beauty, and her ear again to drink in the melody of his voice. It was true—it was surely true—and she put her long white fingers to her forehead while thinking of him—yes, yes—it was true that he loved her—but her heart called again for his presence, and longed to hear him once more repeat, in fervid accents of eloquence, the enthusiasm of his passion.

Acknowledged love, however, in pure and honorable minds, places the conduct under that refined sense of propriety, which is not only felt to be a restraint upon the freedom of virtuous principle itself, but is observed with that jealous circumspection

which considers even suspicion as a stain upon its purity. No matter how intense affection in a virtuous bosom may be, yet no decorum of life is violated by it, no outwork even of the minor morals surrendered, nor is any act or expression suffered to appear that might take away from the exquisite feeling of what is morally essential to female modesty. For this reason, therefore, it was that our heroine, though anxious to meet Osborne again, could not bring herself to walk towards her accustomed haunts, lest he might suspect that she thus indelicately sought him out. *He* had frequently been there, and wondered that *she* never came; but however deep his disappointment at her absence, or it might be, neglect, yet in consequence of their last interview, he could not summon courage to pay a visit, as he had sometimes before, to her family.

Nearly a fortnight had now elapsed, when Jane, walking one day in a small shrubbery that skirted the little lawn before her father's door, received a note by a messenger whom she recognized as a servant of Mr. Osborne's.

The man, after putting it into her hands, added:

"I was desired, if possible, to bring back an answer."

She blushed deeply on receiving it, and shook so much that the tremor of her small white hands gave evident proof of the agitation which it produced in her bosom. She read as follows:—

"Oh why is it that I cannot see you! or what has become of you? This absence is painful to me beyond the power of endurance. Alas, if you loved



with the deep and burning devotion that I do, you would not thus avoid me. Do you not know, and feel, that our hearts have poured into each other the secret of our mutual passion. Oh surely, surely, you cannot forget that moment—a moment for which I could willingly endure a century of pain. That moment has thrown a charm into my existence that will render my whole future life sweet. All that I may suffer will be, and already is softened in the consciousness that you love me. Oh let me see you—I cannot rest, I cannot live without you. I beseech you, I implore you, as you would not bring me down to despair and sorrow—as you would not wring my heart with the agony of disappointment—to meet me this evening at the same place and the same hour as before.

“Yours—*yours for ever*,

“H. O.

“N. B.—The bearer is trustworthy, and already, acquainted with the secret of our attachment, so that you need not hesitate to send me a reply by him—and let it be a *written* one.”

After perusing this, she paused for a moment, and felt so much embarrassed by the fact of their love being known to a third person, that she could not look upon the messenger, while addressing him, without shamefacedness and confusion.

“Wait a little,” she said at length, “I will return presently”—and with a singular conflict between joy, shame, and terror, she passed with downcast looks out of the shrubbery, sought her own room,

and having placed writing materials before her, attempted to write. It was not, however, till after some minutes that she could collect herself sufficiently to use them. As she took the pen in her hand, something like guilt seemed to press upon her heart—the blood forsook her cheeks, and her strength absolutely left her.

“Is not this wrong,” she thought. “I have already been guilty of dissimulation, if not of direct falsehood to my father, and now I am about to enter into a correspondence without his knowledge.”

The acuteness of her moral sense occasioned her, in fact, to feel much distress, and the impression of religious sanction early inculcated upon a mind naturally so gentle and innocent as her’s, cast by its solemn influence a deep gloom over the brief history of their loves. She laid the pen down, and covering her face with both hands, burst into a flood of tears.

“Why is it,” she said to herself, “that a conviction as if of guilt mingles itself with my affection for him; and that snatches of pain and melancholy darken my mind, when I join in our morning and evening worship? I fear, I fear, that God’s grace and protection have been withdrawn from me ever since I deceived my father. But these errors,” she proceeded, “are my own, and not Henry’s—and why should *he* suffer pain and distress because *I* have been uncandid to others?”

Upon this slender argument she proceeded to write the following reply, but still with an under-

current of something like remorse stealing through a mind that felt with incredible delicacy the slightest deviation from what was right, yet possessed not the necessary firmness to resist what was wrong.

"I know that it is indelicate, and very improper—yes, and sinful in me to write to you—and I would not do so, but that I cannot bear to think that *you* should suffer pain. Why should you be distressed, when you know that my affection for you will never change?—*will*, alas! I should add, *can* never change. Dear Henry, is it not sufficient for our happiness that our love is mutual? It ought at least to be so; and it would be so, provided we kept its character unstained by any deviation from moral feeling or duty in the sight of God. You must not continue to write to me, for I shall not, and I can not persist in a course of deliberate insincerity to those who love me with so much affection. I will, however, see you this day, two hours earlier than the time appointed in your note. I could not absent myself from the family, *then*, without again risking an indirect breach of truth, and this I am resolved never to do. I hope you will not think less of me for writing to you, although it be very wrong on my part. I have already wept for it, and my eyes are even now filled with tears; but *you* surely will not be a harsh judge upon the conduct of *your own*

"JANE SINCLAIR."

Having sealed this letter, she hid it in her bosom, and after delaying a short time to compose her

features, again proceeded to the shrubbery, where she found the servant waiting. Simple as was the act of handing him the note, yet so inexpressibly delicate was the whole tenor of her mind, that the slightest step irreconcilable with her standard of female propriety, left behind it a distinct and painful trace that disturbed the equilibrium of a character so finely balanced. With an abashed face and burning brow, she summoned courage, however, to give it, and was instantly proceeding home, when the messenger observed that she had given him the wrong letter. She then took the right one from her bosom, and placing it in his hands would again have hurried into the house.

"You do not mean, I suppose, to send him back his own note," observed the man, handing her Osborne's as he spoke.

"No, no," she replied, "give it to me; I knew not—in fact it was a mistake." She then received Osborne's letter, and hastily withdrew.

The reader may have observed, that so long as Jane merely contemplated the affection that subsisted between Osborne and herself, as a matter unconnected with any relative association, and one on which the heart will dwell with delight while nothing intrudes to disturb its serenity, so long was the contemplation one of perfect happiness. But the moment she approached her family, or found herself on the eve of taking another step in its progress, such was her almost morbid candor, and her timid shrinking from any violation of truth, that her affection for this very reason became darkened.

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as she herself said, by snatches of melancholy and pain.

It is indeed difficult to say whether such a tender perception of good and evil as characterized all her emotions, may not have predisposed her mind to the unhappy malady which eventually overcame it; or whether, on the other hand, the latent existence of the malady in her temperament may not have rendered such perceptions too delicate for the healthy discharge of human duties.

Be this as it may, our innocent and beautiful girl is equally to be pitied; and we trust that in either case the sneers of the coarse and heartless will be spared against a character they cannot understand. At all events, it is we think slightly, and but slightly evident, that even at the present stage of her affection, something prophetic of her calamity, in a faintly perceptible degree may, to an observing mind, be recognized in the vivid and impulsive power with which that affection has operated upon her. If anything could prove this, it is the fervency with which, previous to the hour of appointment, she bent in worship before God, to beseech His pardon for the secret interview she was about to give her lover. And in any other case, such an impression, full of religious feeling as it was, would have prevented the subject of it from acting contrary to its tendency; but here was the refined dread of error, lively even to acuteness, absolutely incapable of drawing back the mind from the transgression of moral duty which filled it with a feeling nearly akin to remorse

Jane that day met the family at dinner, merely as a matter of course, for she could eat nothing. There was, independently of this, a timidity in her manner which they noticed, but could not understand.

"Why," said her father, "you were never a great eater, Jane, but latterly you live, like the chameleon, on air. Surely your health cannot be good, with such a poor appetite;—your own Ariel eats more."

"I feel my health to be very good, papa; but—" she hesitated a little, attempted to speak, and paused again; "Although my health is good," she at last proceeded, "I am not, papa,—I mean my spirits are sometimes better than they ever were, and sometimes more depressed."

"They are depressed now, Jane," said her mother.

"I don't know that, mamma. Indeed I could not describe my present state of feeling; but I think,—indeed I know I am not so good as I ought to be. I am not so good, mamma, and maybe one day you will all have to forgive me more than you think."

Her father laid his knife and fork down, and fixing his eyes affectionately upon her, said:

"My child, there is something wrong with you."

Jane herself, who sat beside her mother, made no reply; but putting her arms about her neck, she laid her cheek against her's, and wept for many minutes. She then rose in a paroxysm of increasing sorrow, and throwing her arms about her father's neck also, sobbed out as upon the occasion already mentioned:—

"Oh, papa, pity and forgive me;—your poor Jane, pity her and forgive her."

The old man struggled with his grief, for he saw that the tears of the family rendered it a duty upon him to be firm: nay, he smiled after a manner, and said in a voice of forced good humor:

"You are a foolish slut, Jane, and play upon us, because you know we pet and love you too much. If you cannot eat your dinner go play, and get an appetite for to-morrow."

She kissed him, and as was her habit of compliance with his slightest wish, left the room as he had desired her.

"Henry," said his wife, "there is something wrong with her."

For a time he could not speak; but after a deep silence he wiped away a few straggling tears, and replied:

"Yes! yes! do you not see that there is a mystery upon my child!—a mystery which weighs down my heart with affliction."

"Dear papa," said Agnes, "don't forbode evil for her."

"It's a mere nervous affection," said William. "She ought to take more exercise. Of late she has been too much within."

Maria and Agnes exchanged looks; and for the first time, a suspicion of the probable cause flashed simultaneously across their minds. They sat beside each other at dinner, and Maria said in a whisper:

"Agnes, you and I are thinking of the same thing."

"I am thinking of Jane," said her candid and affectionate sister.

"My opinion is," rejoined Maria, "that she is attached to Charles Osborne."

"I suspect it is so," whispered Agnes. "Indeed from many things that occur to me I am now certain of it."

"I don't see any particular harm in that," replied Maria.

"It may be a very unhappy attachment for Jane, though," said Agnes. "Only think, Maria, if Osborne should not return her affection: I know Jane,—she would sink under it."

"Not return her affection!" replied her sister. "Where would he find another so beautiful, and every way so worthy of him?"

"Very true, Maria; and I trust in heaven he may think so. But how, if he should never know or suspect her love for him?"

"I cannot answer *that*," said the other; "but we will talk more about it by-and-by."

Whilst this dialogue went on in a low tone, the other members of the family sat in silence and concern, each evidently anxious to develop the mystery of Jane's recent excitement at dinner. At length the old man's eye fell upon his two other daughters, and he said:

"What is this, children—what is this whispering all about? Perhaps some of you can explain the conduct of that poor child."



"But, papa," said Agnes, "you are not to know *all* our secrets."

"Am I not, indeed, Aggy? That's pretty evident from the cautious tone in which you and Mary speak."

"Well, but Agnes is right, Henry," said her mother: "to know the daughters' secrets is my privilege—and yours to know William's—if he has any."

"Upon my word, mother, mine are easily carried, I assure you."

"Suppose, papa," observed Agnes, good-humoredly, "that I was to fall in love, now—as is not——"

"Improbable that you may—you baggage," replied her father, smiling, whilst he completed the sentence; "Well, and you would not tell me if you did?"

"No indeed, sir; I should not. Perhaps I ought, —but I could not, certainly, bring myself to do it. For instance, would it be either modest or delicate in me, to go and say to your face, 'Papa, I'm in love.' In that case the next step, I suppose, would be to make you the messenger between us. Now would you not expect as much, papa, if I told you?" said the arch and lively girl.

"Aggy, you are a presuming gipsy," replied the old man, joining in the laugh which she had caused. "Me your messenger!"

"Yes, and a steady one you would make, sir. I am sure you would not, at all events, overstep your instructions."

"That will be one quality essentially necessary

to any messenger of *your's*, Agnes," replied her father, in the same spirit.

"Papa," said she suddenly changing her manner, and laying aside her gaiety, "what I said in jest of myself, may be seriously true of another in this very family. Suppose Jane"—

"Jane!" exclaimed the old man;—"impossible! She is but a girl!—but a child!"

"Agnes, this is foolish of you," said her sister. "It is possible, after all, that you are doing poor Jane injustice. Papa, Agnes only speaks from suspicion. We are not certain of anything. It was I mentioned it first, but merely from suspicion."

"If Jane's affections are engaged," said her father, "I tremble to think of the consequences should she experience the slightest disappointment. But it cannot be, Maria,—the girl has too much sense, and her principles are too well established."

"What is it you mean, girls?" inquired their mother, in a tone of surprise and alarm.

"Indeed, Agnes," said Maria, reprovingly, "it is neither fair nor friendly to poor Jane, to bring out a story founded only on a mere surmise. Agnes insists, mamma, that Jane is attached to Charles Osborne."

"It certainly occurred to us only a few moments ago, I allow," replied Agnes; "but if I am mistaken in this, I will give up my judgment in everything else. And I mentioned it solely to prevent our own distress, particularly papa's, with respect to the change that is of late so visible in her conduct and manner."

Strange to say, however, that Mr. Sinclair and his wife both repudiated the idea of her attachment to Osborne, and insisted that Agnes' suspicion was rash and groundless.

It was impossible, they said, that such an attachment could exist; Jane and Osborne had seen too little of each other, and were both of a disposition too shy and diffident to rush so precipitately into a passion that is usually the result of far riper years than either of them had yet reached.

Mr. Sinclair admitted that Jane was a girl full of affection, and likely to be extremely susceptible, yet it was absurd, he added, to suppose for a moment, that she would suffer them to be engaged, or her peace of mind disturbed, by a foolish regard for a smoothfaced boy, and she herself not much beyond sixteen.

There is scarcely to be found, in the whole range of human life and character any observation more true, and at the same time more difficult to be understood, than the singular infatuation of parents who have survived their own passions, — whenever the prudence of their children happens to be called in question.

We know not whether such a fact be necessary to the economy of life, and the free breathings of youthful liberty, but this at least is clear to any one capable of noting down its ordinary occurrences, that no matter how acutely and vividly parents themselves may have felt the passion of love when young, they appear as ignorant of the symptoms that mark its stages in the lives of their children, as

If all memory of its existence had been obliterated out of their being. Perhaps this may be wisely designed, and no doubt it is; but, alas! its truth is a melancholy comment upon the fleeting character of the only passion that charms our early life, and fills the soul with sensations too ethereal to be retained by a heart which grosser associations have brought beneath the standard of purity necessary for their existence in it.

Jane, as she bent her way to the place of appointment, felt like one gradually emerging out of darkness into light. The scene at dinner had quickened her moral sense, which, as the reader already knows, was previous to that perhaps morbidly acute. Every step, however, towards the idol of her young devotion, removed the memory of what had occurred at home, and collected around her heart all the joys and terrors that in maidenly diffidence characterize the interview she was about to give her lover. Oh how little do we know of those rapid lights and shadows which shift and tremble across the spirits of the gentle sex, when approaching to hold this tender communion with those whom they love. Nothing that we remember resembles the busy working of the soul on such occasions, so much as those lucid streamers which flit in sweeps of delicate light along the northern sky, filling it at once with beauty and terror, and emitting at the same time a far and almost inaudible undertone of unbroken music.

Trembling and fluttering like a newly-caught bird, Jane approached the place of meeting and

found Osborne there awaiting her. The moment he saw the graceful young creature approach him, he felt that he had never until then loved her so intensely. The first declaration of their attachment was made during an accidental interview, but there is a feeling of buoyant confidence that flashes up from the heart, when, at the first concerted meeting of love we see the object of our affection advance towards us,—for that deliberate act of a faithful heart separates the beloved one, in imagination, to ourselves, and gives a fulness to our enjoyment which melts us in an exulting tenderness indescribable by language. Those who have doubted the punctuality of some beloved girl, and afterwards seen her come, will allow that our description of that rapturous moment is not overdrawn.

“My dear, dear Jane,” exclaimed Osborne, taking her hand and placing her beside him, “I neither knew my own heart nor the extent of its affection for you until this meeting. In what terms shall I express—but I will not attempt it—I cannot—but my soul burns with love for you, such as was never felt by mortal.”

“It is my trust and confidence in your love that brings me here,” she replied; “and indeed Charles it is more than that—I know your health is, at the best, easily affected, and your spirits naturally prone to despondency; and I feared,” said the artless girl, “that—that—indeed I feared you might suffer pain, and that pain might bring on ill health again.”

“And I am so dear to you, Jane?”

Jane replied by a smile and a look inexpressibly tender.

"I am, I am!" he exclaimed with rapture; "and now the world—life—nothing—nothing can add to the fullness of my happiness. And your note, my beloved—the conclusion of it—*your own Jane Sinclair!* But you must be more my own yet—legally and forever mine! Mine! Shall I be able to bear it!—shall I? Jane?" said he, his enthusiastic temperament kindling as he spoke—"Oh what, my dearest, my own dearest, if this should not last, will it not consume me? Will it not destroy me? this overwhelming excess of rapture!"

"But you must restrain it, Charles; surely the suspense arising from the doubt of our being beloved is more painful than the certainty that we are so."

"Yes; but the exulting sense, my dear Jane, to me almost oppressive,—but I rave, I rave; it is all delight—all happiness! Yes, it will prolong life,—for we know what we live for."

"We do," said Jane, in a low, sweet voice, whilst her eye fed upon his beauty. "Do I not live for you, Charles?"

His lip was near her cheek as she spoke; he then gently drew her to him, and in a voice lower, and if possible more melodious than her own, said, "Oh Jane, is there not something inexpressibly affectionate—some wild and melting charm in the word *wife*?"

"That is a feeling," she replied, evidently softened by the tender spirit of his words, "of which you are a better judge than I can be."

"Oh say, my dearest, let me hear you say with your own lips, that you will be my wife."

"I will," she whispered—and as she spoke, he inhaled the fragrance of her breath.

"My wife!"

"Your wife!"

Sweet, and long, and rapturous was the kiss which sealed this sacred and entrancing promise. The pathetic sentiment that pervaded their attachment kept their passion pure, and seldom have two lovers so beautiful, sat cheek to cheek together, in an embrace guileless and innocent as theirs.

Jane, however, withdrew herself from his arms, and for a few moments, felt not even conscious, so so far was her heart removed from evil, that an embrace under such circumstances was questionable, much less improper. Following so naturally from the tenderness of their dialogue, it seemed to be rather the necessary action arising from the eloquence of their feeling, than an act which might incur censure or reproof. Her fine sense of propriety, however, could be scarcely said to have slumbered, for, with a burning cheek and a sobbing voice, she exclaimed,

"Charles, these secret meetings must cease. They have involved me in a course of dissimulation and falsehood towards my family, which I cannot bear. You say you love me, and I know you do, but surely you could not esteem, nor place full confidence in a girl, who, to gratify either her own affection or yours, would deceive her parents."

"But, my dearest girl, you reason too severely.

Surely almost all who love must, in the earliest stages of affection, practice, to a certain extent, a harmless deception upon their friends, until at least their love is sanctioned. Marriages founded upon mutual attachment, would be otherwise impracticable."

"No deception, dear Charles, can be harmless. I cannot forget the precepts of truth, and virtue, and obedience to a higher law even than his own will, which my dear papa taught me, and I will never more violate them, even for you."

"You are too pure, too full of truth, my beloved girl, for this world. Social life is carried on by so much dissimulation, hypocrisy, and falsehood, that you will be actually unfit to live in it."

"Then let me *die* in it sooner than be guilty of any one of them. No, dear Charles, I am not too full of truth. On the contrary, I cannot understand how it is that my love for you has plunged me into deceit. Nay more, Charles," she exclaimed, rising up, and placing her hand on her heart, "I am wrong *here*—why is it, will you tell me, that our attachment has crossed and disturbed my devotions to God. I cannot worship God as I would, and as I used to do. What if His grace be withdrawn from me? Could you love me then? Could you love a cast-away? No, Charles, you love truth too well, to cherish affection for a being, a reprobate perhaps, and full of treachery and falsehood. I hope I am not such, but I fear sometimes that I am."

Her youthful lover gazed upon her as she stood



with her sparkling eyes fixed upon vacancy, Never did she appear so beautiful; her features were kindled into an expression which was new to him—but an expression so full of high moral feeling beaming like the very divinity of truth from her countenance, yet overshadowed by an unsettled gloom which gave to her whole appearance, the power of creating both awe and admiration in the spectator.

The boy was deeply affected, and in a voice scarcely firm, said in soothing and endearing accents, whilst he took her hand in his,

“Jane, my best beloved, and dearest—say, oh say in what manner I can compose your mind, or relieve you from the necessity of practising the deceit which troubles you so much.”

“Oh,” said she, bending her eye on him, “but it is sweet to be beloved by those that are dear to us. Your sympathy thrills through my whole frame with a soothing sensation inexpressibly delightful. It is sweet to me—for you, Charles, are my only confident. Dear, dear Charles, how I longed to see you, and to hear your voice.”

As she made this simple but touching admission of the power of her love, she laid her head on his bosom and wept. Charles pressed her to his heart, and strove to speak, but could not—she felt his tears raining fast upon her face.

At length he said, pressing his beautiful one more to his beating bosom—“the moment, the moment that I cease to love you, may it, O God, be my last.”

She rose, and quietly wiping her eyes, said—"I will go—we will meet no more—no more in secret."

"Oh, Jane," said her lover, "how shall I make myself worthy of you; but why," he added, "should our love be a secret? Surely it will be sanctioned by our friends. You shall not be distressed by the necessity of insincerity, although it would be wrong to call the simple concealment of your love for me by so harsh a name."

"But my papa," she said, "he is so good to me; they are all so affectionate, they love me too much; but my dear papa, I cannot stand with a stain on my conscience in his presence. Not that I fear him; but it would be treacherous and ungrateful: I would tell him all, but I cannot."

"My sweet girl, let not that distress you. Your father shall be made acquainted with it from other lips. I will disclose the secret to *my* father, and, with a proud heart, tell him of our affection."

It never once occurred to a creature so utterly unacquainted with the ways of the world as Jane was, that Mr. Osborne might disapprove of their attachment, and prevent a boy so youthful, from following the bent of his own inclinations.

"Dear Charles," said she, smiling, "what a load their approval will take off my heart. I can then have papa's pardon for my past duplicity towards him; and my mind will be so much soothed and composed. We can also meet each other with their sanction."

"My wife! my wife!" said Osborne, looking on

her with a rapturous gaze of love and admiration—and carrying her allusion to the consent of their families up to the period when he might legitimately give her that title—"My wife," he exclaimed, "my young, my beautiful, my pure and unspotted wife. Heavens! and is—*is* the day surely to come when I am to call you so!"

The beautiful girl hung her head a moment as if abashed, then gliding timidly towards him, leant upon his shoulder, and putting her lips up to his ear, with a blush as much of delight as of modesty whispered—"My husband, my husband, why should not these words, dear Charles, be as sweet a charm to *my* heart, as those you've mentioned are to yours. I would, but I cannot add—"no, I will not suffer it," she exclaimed, on his attempting, in the prostration of the moment, to embrace her. "You must not presume upon the sincerity of an affectionate and ingenuous heart. Farewell, dear Charles, until we can see each other without a consciousness that we are doing wrong." Saying which, she extended her hand to him, and in a moment was on her way home.

And *was* the day to come when he could call her his? Alas! that day was never registered in the records of time.

Oh! how deeply beloved was our heroine by her family, when her moods of mind and state of spirits fixed the tone of their domestic enjoyments and almost influenced the happiness of their lives. O gentle and pure spirit, what heart cannot love thee, when those who knew thee best gathered their affec-

tions so lovingly around thee, the star of their hearth—the idol of their inner shrine—the beautiful, the meek, the affectionate, and even then, in consequence of thy transcendent charms, the far-famed Fawn of Springvale!

In the early part of that evening, Jane's spirits, equable and calm, hushed in a great measure the little domestic debate which had been held at dinner, concerning the state of her affections. The whole family partook of her cheerfulness, and her parents in particular, cast several looks of triumphant sagacity at Maria and Agnes, especially at the latter

"Jane," said her father, in the triumph of his heart, "you are not aware that Agnes is in love."

The good-humored tone in which this was spoken, added to the utterly unsuspecting character of the innocent being to whom the words were addressed, rendered it impossible for Jane to suppose that there was any latent meaning in his observation that could be levelled at herself. In truth, there was not, for any satire it contained was directed especially to Agnes. There are tones of voice, the drift of which no effort, however forced or studied, can conceal, particularly from those who, by intimacy and observation, are acquainted with them, and with the moods of mind and shades of feeling which prompt them. Jane knew intuitively by the tone in which her father spoke—and by the expression of his countenance, that the words were not meant to apply by any direct analogy to herself. She consequently preserved her composure and re-

plied to the question, with the same good humor in which the words were uttered.

"Agnes in love! Well, papa, and surely that is not unnatural."

"Thank you, Jane," replied Agnes. "Papa, that's a rebuff worth something; and Jane," she proceeded, anxious still to vindicate her own sagacity with respect to her sister, "suppose I should be in love, surely I may carry on an innocent intercourse with my lover, without consulting papa."

"No, Agnes, you should not," replied her sister, vehemently; "no intercourse—no intercourse without papa's knowledge, can be innocent. There is deceit and dissimulation in it—there is treachery in it. It is impossible to say how gloomily such an intercourse may end. Only think, my dear Agnes," she proceeded, in a low, but vehement and condensed voice—"only think, dear Agnes, what the consequences might be to you if such an attachment, and such a clandestine mode of conducting it, should in consequence of your duplicity to papa, cause the Almighty God to withdraw His grace from you, and that you should thereby become a cast-away—a cast-away! I shudder to think of it! I shudder to think of it."

"Jane, sit beside me," said Mr. Sinclair; "you are rather too hard upon poor Agnes—but, still come, and sit beside me. You are my own sweet child—my own dutiful and candid girl."

"I cannot, I cannot, papa, I *dare* not," she exclaimed, and without uttering another word she arose, and rushed out of the room. In less than a

minute, however, she returned again, and approaching him, said—"Papa, forgive me, I will, I trust, soon be a better girl than I am; bless me, and bid me good night. Mamma, bless me you too, I am your poor Jane, and I know you all love me more than you ought. Do not think that I am unhappy—do not think it. I have not been for some time so happy as I am to-night."

She then passed out of the room, and retired to her own apartment.

When she was gone, Agnes, who sat beside her father, turned to him, and leaned her head upon his breast, burst into bitter tears.

"Papa," she exclaimed, "I believe you will *now* admit that I have gained the victory. My sister's peace of mind or happiness is gone for ever. Unless Osborne either now is, or becomes in time attached to her, I know not what the consequences may be."

"It will be well for Osborne, at all events, if he has not practised upon her affections," said William; "that is, granting that the suspicion be just. But the truth is, I don't think Osborne has any thing to do with her feelings. It is merely some imaginary trifle that she has got into her foolish little head, poor girl. Don't distress yourself, father—you know she was always over-scrupulous. Even the most harmless fib that ever was told, is a crime in her eyes. I wish, for my part, she had a little wholesome wickedness about—I don't mean that sir, in a *very* unfavorable light," he said in reply to a look of severity from his father, "but I wish she

had *some* leaning to error about her. She would, in one sense at least, be the better for it."

"We shall see," said his father, who evidently spoke in deep distress of mind, "we shall consider in the course of the evening what ought to be done."

"Better to take her gently," observed her mother, wiping away a tear, "gentleness and love will make her tell any thing—and that there is something on her mind no one can doubt."

"I won't have her distressed, my dear," replied her father. "It cannot be of much importance I think after all—but whatever it may be, her own candid mind will give it forth spontaneously. I know my child, and will answer for her."

"Why then, papa, are you so much distressed, if you think it of no importance?" asked Maria.

"If her finger ached, it would distress me, child, and you know it."

"Why, she and Osborne have had no opportunity of being together, out of the eyes of the family," observed William.

"That's more than you know, William," said Agnes; "she has often walked out."

"But she always did so," replied her mother.

"She would never meet him privately," said her father, firmly, "of that I am certain as my life."

"That, papa," returned Agnes, "I am afraid, is precisely what she has done, and what now distresses her. And I am sure that whatever is wrong with her, no explanation will be had from herself. Though kind and affectionate as ever, she has been

very shy with me and Maria of late—and indeed, has made it a point to keep aloof from us. Three or four times I spoke to her in a tone of confidence, as if I was about to introduce some secret of my own, but she always under some pretense or other left me. I had not thought of Osborne at the time, nor could I guess what troubled her—but something I saw did.” Her father sighed deeply, and, clasping his hands, uttered a silent ejaculation to heaven on her behalf. “That is true,” said he, “it is now the hour of evening worship; let us kneel and remember her trouble, the poor child, whatever it may be.”

“Had I not better call her down, papa,” said Agnes.

“Not this evening,” he replied, “not this evening—she is too much disturbed, and will probably prefer praying alone.”

The old man then knelt down, and after the usual form of evening worship, uttered a solemn and affecting appeal upon her behalf, to Him, who can pour balm upon the wounded spirit, and say unto the weary and heavy laden, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.” But when he went on in words more particularly describing her state of mind, to mention, and plead for “their youngest,” and “their dearest,” and “their best beloved,” his voice became tremulous, and for a moment he paused, but the pause was filled with the sobbings of those who loved her, and especially by the voice of that affectionate sister who loved her most—for of them all, Agnes only wept aloud. At length the



prayer was concluded, and rising up with wet eyes, they perceived that the beloved object of their supplications had glided into the room, and joined their worship unperceived.

"Dear Jane," said her father, "we did not know you were with us."

She made no immediate reply, but, after a moment's apparent struggle, went over, and laying her head upon his bosom, sobbed out—"Papa, your love has overcome me. I will tell you all."

"Soul of truth and candor," exclaimed the old man, clasping her to his bosom, "heroic child! I knew she would do it, and I said so. Go out now, and leave us to ourselves. Darling, don't be distressed. If you feel difficulty I will not ask to hear it. Or perhaps you would rather mention it to your mamma."

"No—to you papa—to you—and you will not be harsh upon me, I am a weak girl, and have done very wrong."

It was indeed a beautiful thing to see this fair and guiltless penitent leaning against her indulgent father's bosom, in which her blushing face was hid, and disclosing the history of an attachment as pure and innocent as ever warmed the heart of youth and beauty. Oh no wonder, thou sweetest and most artless of human beings, that when the heavy blight of reason came upon thee, and thou disappearedst from his eyes, that the old man's spirit became desolate and his heart broken, and that he said after thy dissolution to every word of comfort uttered to him—"It is vain, it is vain—I cannot stay. I hear

her voice calling me—she calls me, my beautiful—my pride—my child—my child—she calls me, and I cannot stay.” Nor did he long.

To none else did her father that night reveal the purport of this singular disclosure, except to Mrs. Sinclair herself—but the next morning before breakfast, the secret had been made known to the rest. All trouble and difficulty, as to the conduct they should pursue, were removed in consequence of Osborne’s intention to ask his father to sanction their attachment, and until the consequence of that step should be known, nothing further on their part could be attempted. On this point, however, they were not permitted to remain long in suspense, for ere two o’clock that day, Mr. Osborne had, in the name of his son, proposed for the hand of our fair girl, which proposal we need scarcely say was instantly and joyfully accepted. It is true, their immediate union was not contemplated. Both were much too youthful and inexperienced to undertake the serious duties of married life, but it was arranged that Osborne, whose health, besides, was not sufficiently firm, should travel, see the world, and strengthen his constitution by the genial air of a warmer and more salubrious climate.

Alas! why is it that the sorrows of love are far sweeter than its joys? We do not mean to say, that our young hero and heroine, if we may presume so to call them, were insensible to this lapse of serene delight which now opened upon them. No—the happiness they enjoyed was indeed such as few taste in such a world as this is. Their attach-

ment was now sanctioned by all their mutual friends, and its progress was unimpeded by any scruple arising from clandestine intercourse, or a breach of duty. But, with secrecy, passed away those trembling snatches of unimaginable transport which no state of permitted love has ever yet known. The stolen glance, the passing whisper, the guarded pressure of the soft white hand timidly returned, and the fearful rapture of the hurried kiss—alas! alas!—and alas! for the memory of Eloiza!

Time passed, and the preparations necessary for Osborne's journey were in fact nearly completed. One day, about a fortnight before his departure, he and Jane were sitting in a little ozier summer-house in Mr. Sinclair's garden, engaged in a conversation more tender than usual, for each felt their love deeper and their hearts sink as the hour of separation approached them. Jane's features exhibited such a singular union of placid confidence and melancholy, as gave something Madonna-like and divine to her beauty. Osborne sat, and for a long time gazed upon her with a silent intensity of rapture for which he could find no words. At length he exclaimed in a reverie—

"I will swear it—I *may* swear it."

"Swear what, Charles?"

"That the moment I see a girl more beautiful, I will cease to write to you—I will cease to love you."

The blood instantly forsook her cheeks, and she gazed at him with wonder and dismay.

"What, dear Charles, do you mean?"

"Oh, my pride and my treasure!" he exclaimed,

wildly clasping her to his bosom—"there is none so fair—none on earth or in heaven itself so beautiful—that, my own ever dearest, is my meaning."

The confidence of her timid and loving heart was instantly restored—and she said smiling, yet with a tear struggling through her eyelid, "I believe I am—I think I am beautiful. I know they call me the Fawn of Springvale, because I am gentle."

"The angels are not so gentle, nor so pure, nor so innocent as you are, my unwedded wife."

"I am glad I am," she replied; "and I am glad, too, that I am beautiful—but it is all on your account, and for your sake, dear Charles."

The fascination—the power of such innocence, and purity, and love, utterly overcame him, and he wept in transport upon her bosom.

The approach of her sisters, however, and the liveliness of Agnes, soon changed the character of their dialogue. For an hour they ran and chased each other, and played about, after which Charles took his leave of them for the evening. Jane, as usual, being the last he parted from, whispered to him, as he went—

"Charles, promise me, that in future you wont repeat—the—the words you used in the summer-house."

"What words, love?"

"You remember—about—about—what you said you might *swear*—and that, in that case, you would cease to love me."

"Why dearest, should I promise you this?"

"Because," she said, in a low, sweet whisper,

"they disturb me when I think of them—a slight thing makes my heart sink."

"You are a foolish, sweet girl—but I promise you, I shall never again use them."

She bestowed on him a look and smile that were more than a sufficient compensation for this; and after again bidding him farewell, she tripped lightly into the house.

From this onward, until the day of their separation, the spirits of our young lovers were more and more overcast, and the mirthful intercourse of confident love altogether gone. Their communion was now marked by despondency and by tears, for the most part shed during their confidential interviews with each other. In company they were silent and dejected, and ever as their eyes met in long and loving glances, they could scarcely repress their grief. Sometimes, indeed, Jane on being spoken to, after a considerable silence, would attempt in vain to reply, her quivering voice and tearful eyes affording unequivocal proof of the subject which engaged her heart. Their friends, of course, endeavoured to console and sustain them on both sides; and frequently succeeded in soothing them into a childlike resignation to the necessity that occasioned the dreary period of absence that lay before them. These intervals of patience, however, did not last long; the spirits of our young lovers were, indeed, disquieted within them, and the heart of each drooped under the severest of all its calamities—the pain of loss for that object which is dearest to its affections.

It was arranged that, on the day previous to Charles' departure, Osborne's family should dine at Mr. Sinclair's; for they knew that the affliction caused by their separation would render it necessary that Jane, on that occasion, should be under her own roof, and near the attention and aid of her friends. Mr. Osborne almost regretted the resolution to which he had come of sending his son to travel, for he feared that the effect of absence from the fair girl to whom he was so deeply attached, might possibly countervail the benefits arising from a more favorable climate; but as he had already engaged the services of an able and experienced tutor, who on two or three previous occasions had been over the Continent, he expected, reasonably enough, that novelty, his tutor's good sense, and the natural elasticity of youth would soon efface a sorrow in general so transient, and in due time restore him to his usual spirits. He consequently adhered to his resolution—the day of departure was fixed, and arrangements made for the lovers to separate, as we have already intimated.

Jane Sinclair, from the period when Osborne's attachment and her's was known and sanctioned by their friends, never slept a night from her beloved sister Agnes; nor had any other person living, not even Osborne himself, such an opportunity as Agnes had of registering in the record of a sisterly heart so faithful a transcript of her love.

On the night previous to their leave taking, Agnes was astonished at the coldness of her limbs,

and begged her to allow additional covering to be put on the bed.

"No, dear Agnes, no; only grant me one favor—do not speak to me—leave my heart to its own sorrows—to its own misery—to its own despair; for, Agnes, I feel a presentiment that I shall never see him again."

She pressed her lips against Agnes' cheek when she had concluded, and Agnes almost started, for that lip hitherto so glowing and warm, felt hard and cold as marble.

Osborne, who for some time past had spent almost every day at Mr. Sinclair's, arrived the next morning ere the family had concluded breakfast. Jane immediately left the table, for she had tasted nothing but a cup of tea, and placing herself beside him on the sofa, looked up mournfully into his face for more than a minute; she then caught his hand, and placing it between her's, gazed upon him again, and smiled. The boy saw at once that the smile was a smile of misery; and that the agony of separation was likely to be too much for her to bear. The contrast at that moment between them both was remarkable. She pale, cold, and almost abstracted from the perception of her immediate grief; he glowing in the deep carmine of youth and apparent health—his eye as well as her's sparkling with a light which the mere beauty of early life never gives. Alas, poor things! little did they, or those to whom they were so very dear, imagine that, as they then gazed upon each other, each bore in line-

aments so beautiful the symptoms of the respective maladies that were to lay them low.

"I wish, Jane, you would try and get up your spirits, love, and see and be entertaining to poor Charles, as this is the last day he is to be with you."

She looked quickly at her mother—"The *last*, mamma?"

"I mean for a while, dear, until after his return from the Continent."

She seemed relieved by this. "Oh no, not the last, Charles," she said—"Yet I know not how it is—I know not; but sometimes, indeed, I think it is—and if it were, if it were—"

A paleness more deadly spread over her face; and with a gaze of mute and undying devotion she clasped her hands, and repeated—"if it should be the last—the *last!*"

"I did not think you were so foolish or so weak a girl, Jane," said William, "as to be so cast down, merely because Charles is taking a skip to the Continent to get a mouthful of fresh air, and back again. Why, I know them that go to the Continent four times a year to transact business—a young fellow, by the way, that has been paying his addresses to a lady for the last six or seven years. I wish you saw *them* part, as I did—merely a hearty shake of the hand—'good by, Molly, take care of yourself till I see you again;' and 'farewell, Simor, don't forget the shawl;' and the whole thing's over, and no more about it."

There was evidently something in these words that jarred upon a spirit of such natural tenderness



as Jane's. While William was repeating them, her features expressed a feeling as if of much inward pain; and when he had concluded, she rose up, and seizing both his hands, said, in a tone of meek and earnest supplication:

"Oh! William dear, do not, do not—it is not consolation—it is distress."

"Dear Jane," said the good-natured brother, at once feeling his error, "pardon me, I was wrong; there is no resemblance in the cases—I only wanted to raise your spirits."

"True, William, true; I ought to thank you, and I do thank you."

Whilst this little incident took place, Mr. Sinclair came over and sat beside Charles.

"You see, my dear Charles," said he, "what a heavy task your separation from that poor girl is likely to prove. Let me beg that you will be as firm as possible, and sustain her by a cheerful play of spirits, if you can command them. Do violence to your own heart for this day for her sake."

"I will be firm, sir," said Osborne, "if I can: but if I fail—if I—look at her," he proceeded, in a choking voice, "look at her, and then ask yourself why I—I *should* be firm?"

Whilst he spoke, Jane came over, and seating herself between her father and him, said:

"Papa, you will stay with me and Charles this day, and support us. *You* know, papa, that I am not a weak, weak girl; but when I do a wrong thing, I feel very penitent—I cannot rest."

"You never did wrong, darling," said Osborne,

pressing his lips to her cheek, "you never did wrong."

"Papa says I did not do *much* wrong; yet at one time I did not think so myself; but there is a thing presses upon me still. Papa," she added, turning abruptly to him, "are there not such things in this life as judgments from heaven?"

"Yes, my dear, upon the wicked who, by deep crimes, provoke the justice of the Almighty; but the ways of God are so mysterious, and the innocent so often suffer whilst the guilty escape, that we never almost hazard an opinion upon individual cases."

"But there are *cast-aways*?"

"Yes, darling; but here is Charles anxious to take you out to walk. With such a prospect of happiness and affection before you both, you ought surely to be in the best of spirits."

"Well, I can see why you evade my question," she replied; but she added abruptly, "bless us, papa, bless us." She knelt down, and pulled Charles gently upon his knees also, and joining both hands together, bent her head as if to receive the benediction.

Oh mournful and heart-breaking was her loveliness, as she knelt down before the streaming eyes of her family—a magdeline in beauty, without her guilt.

The old man, deeply moved by the distress of the interesting pair then bent before him, uttered a short prayer suitable to the occasion, after which he blessed them both and again recommen-

ded them to the care of heaven, in terms of touching and beautiful simplicity. His daughter seemed relieved by this, for, after rising, she went to her mother and said:

"We are going to walk, mamma. I *must* endeavor to keep my spirits up this day, for poor Charles' sake."

"Yes, love, do," said her mother, that's a good girl. Let me see how cheerful and sprightly you'll be; and think, dear, of the happy days that are before you and Charles yet, when you'll live in love and affection, surrounded and cherished by both your families."

"Yes, yes," said she, "I often think of that—I'll try mamma—I'll try."

Saying which, she took Charles's arm, and the young persons all went out together.

Jane's place, that evening, was by Osborne's side, as it had been with something like a faint clinging of terror during the whole day. She spoke little, and might be said rather to respond to all he uttered, than to sustain a part in the dialogue. Her distress was assuredly deep, but they knew not then, nor by any means suspected how fearful was its character in the remote and hidden depths of her soul. She sat with Osborne's right hand between her's, and scarcely for a moment ever took her sparkling eyes off his countenance. Many times was she observed to mutter to herself, and her lips frequently moved as if she had been speaking, but no words were uttered, nor any sense of her distress expressed. Once, only, in the course of the evening, were they

startled into a hush of terror and dismay, by a single short laugh, uttered so loud and wildly, that a pause followed it, and, as if with one consentaneous movement, they all assembled about her. Their appearance, however, seemed to bring her to herself, for with her left hand she wafted them away, saying, "Leave us—leave us—this is a day of sorrow to us—the day will end, but when, when, alas, will the sorrow? Papa, some of us will need your prayers now—the sunshine of Jane's life is over—I am the Fawn of Springvale no more—my time with the holy and affectionate flock of whom I was and am an unworthy one, will be short—I may be with you a day, as it were, the next is come and Jane is gone for ever."

"Father," said Osborne, "I shall not go;" and as he spoke he pressed her to his bosom—"I will never leave her."

The boy's tears fell rapidly upon her pale cheeks, and on feeling them she looked up and smiled.

The sobbings of the family were loud, and bitter were the tears which the tender position of the young and beautiful pair wrung from the eyes that looked upon them.

"Your health, my boy," said his father, "my beautiful and only boy, render it necessary that you should go. It is but for a time, Jane dear, my daughter, my boy's beloved, it is only for a time—let him leave you for a little, and he will return confirmed in health and knowledge, and worthy my dear dear girl, to be your's for ever."

"My daughter," said Mr. Sinclair "was once

good and obedient, and she will now do whatever is her own papa's wish."

"Name it, papa, name it," said she, still smiling.

"Suffer Charles to go, my darling—and do not—oh! do not take his departure so much to heart."

"Charles, you must go," said she. "It is the wish of your own father and of mine—but above all, it is the wish of you own—you cannot, you must not gainsay him. What love can prosper which is fouded on disobedience or deceit? You know the words you once loved so well to repeat—I will repeat them now—you must, you will not surely refuse the request of *your own Jane Sinclair*."

The boy seemed for some time irresolute, but at length he clasped her in his arms, and, again, said, in a vehement burst of tenderness:

"No, father, my heart is resolved, I will never leave her. It will kill me, it will lay me in an early grave, and you will have no son to look upon."

"But you will see the heroic example that Jane will set you," said Mr. Sinclair, "she will shame you into firmness, for she will now take leave of you at once; and see then if you love her as you say you do, whether you will not respect her so far as to follow her example. Jane, bid Charles farewell."

This was, perhaps, pressing her strength too far; at all events, the injunction came so unexpectedly, that a pause followed it, and they waited with painful expectation to see what she would do. For upwards of a minute she sat silent, and her lips moved as if she were communing with herself. At length she rose up, and stooping down kissed her lover's

cheek, then, taking his hand as before between her's, she said in a voice astonishingly calm:

"Charles, farewell—remember that I am your Jane Sinclair. Alas!" she added, "I am weak and feeble—help me out of the room."

Both her parents assisted her to leave it, but, on reaching the door, she drew back involuntarily, on hearing Osborne's struggles to detain her.

"Papa," she said, with a look inexpressibly woe-begone and suppliant—"Mamma!"

"Sweet child, what is it?" said both.

"Let me take one last look of him—it will be the last—but not—I—I trust, the last act of my duty to you both."

She turned round and gazed upon him for some time—her features, as she looked, dilated into an expression of delight.

"Is he not," said she, in a low placid whisper, while her smiling eye still rested upon him—"is he not beautiful? Oh! yes, he is beautiful—he is beautiful."

"He is, darling—he is," said both—"come away now—be only a good firm girl and all will soon be well.

"Very, *very* beautiful," said she, in a low contented voice, as without any further wish to remain, she accompanied her parents to another room.

Such was their leaving-taking—thus did they separate. Did they ever meet!

### PART III.

IN the history of the affections we know that circumstances sometimes occur, where duty and inclination maintain a conflict so nicely balanced as to render it judicious not to exact a fulfilment of the former, lest by deranging the structure of our moral feelings, we render the mind either insensible to their existence, or incapable of regulating them. This observation applies only to those subordinate positions of life which involve no great principle of conduct, and violate no cardinal point of human duty. We ought neither to do evil nor suffer evil to be done, where our authority can prevent it, in order that good may follow. But in matters where our own will creates the offence, it is in some peculiar cases not only prudent but necessary to avoid straining a mind naturally delicate, beyond the powers which we know it to possess. We think, for instance, that it was wrong in Mr. Sinclair, at a moment when the act of separating from Osborne might have touched the feelings of his daughter into that softness which lightens and relieves the heart, abruptly to suppress emotions so natural, by exacting a proof of obedience too severe and oppressive to the heart of one who loved as Jane did. She knew it was her duty to obey him the moment he expressed his wish; but he was bound by no duty to demand such an unnecessary proof of her

obedience. The immediate consequences, however, made him sufficiently sensible of his error, and taught him that a knowledge of the human heart is the most difficult task which a parent has to learn.

Jane, conducted by her parents, having reached another apartment, sat down—her father taking a chair on one side, and her mother on the other.

“My darling,” said Mr. Sinclair, “I will never forget this proof of your obedience to me, on so trying an occasion. I know I might rely upon my daughter.”

Jane made no reply to this, but sat apparently wrapped up in an ecstasy of calm and unbroken delight. The smile of happiness with which she contemplated Osborne, on taking her last look of him, was still upon her face, and contrasted so strongly with the agony which they knew she must have felt, that her parents, each from an apprehension of alarming the other feared openly to allude to it, although, they felt their hearts sink in dismay and terror.

“Jane, why do you not speak to your papa and me?” said her mother; “speak to us, love, speak to us—if it was only one word.”

She appeared not to hear this, nor to be at all affected by her mother’s voice or words. After the latter spoke she smiled again, and immediately putting up her long white fingers through the ringlets that shaded her cheek, she pulled them down as one would do who felt anxious to take out the curls—pressing them with slight convulsive energy as they passed through her fingers.



"Henry, dear, what—what is the matter with her?" inquired her mother, whose face became pale with alarm. "Oh! what is wrong with my child!—she does not know us!—Gracious heaven, what is this!"

"Jane, my love, wont you speak to your papa?" said Mr. Sinclair. "Speak to me, my darling,—it is I,—it is your own papa that asks you?"

She looked up, and seemed for moment struggling to recover a consciousness of her situation; but it passed away, and the scarcely perceptible meaning which began almost to become visible in her eye, was again succeeded by that smile which they both so much dreaded to see."

The old man shook his head, and looked with a brow darkened by sorrow, first upon his daughter, and afterwards upon his wife.

"My heart's delight," he exclaimed, "I fear I have demanded more from your obedience than you could perform without danger to yourself. I wish I had allowed her grief to flow, and not required such an abrupt and unseasonable proof of her duty. It was too severe an injunction to a creature so mild and affectionate,—and would to God that I had not sought it!"

"Would to heaven that you had not, my dear Henry. Let us try, however, and move her heart,—if tears could come she would be relieved."

"Bring Agnes in," said her father, "bring in Agnes,—*she* may succeed better with her than we can,—and if Charles be not already gone, there is no use in distressing him by at all alluding to her

situation. She is only overpowered, I trust, and will soon recover."

The mother, on her way to bring Agnes to her sister, met the rest of the family returning to the house after having taken leave of Osborne. The two girls were weeping, for they looked upon him as already a brother; whilst William, in a good-humored tone, bantered them for the want of firmness.

"I think, mother," said he, "they are all in love with him, if they would admit it. Why here's Maria and Agnes, and I dare say they're making as great a rout about him as Jane herself! But bless me! what's the matter, mother, that you look so pale and full of alarm?"

"It's Jane—it's Jane," said Agnes. "Mother, there's something wrong!" and as she spoke she stopped, with uplifted hands, apparently fastened to the earth.

"My poor child!" exclaimed her mother,—“for heaven's sake come in, Agnes. Oh heaven grant that it may soon pass away. Agnes, dear girl, you know her best—come in quick; her papa wants you to try what you can do with her.”

In a moment this loving family, with pale faces and beating hearts, stood in a circle about their affectionate and beautiful sister. Jane sat with her passive hand tenderly pressed between her father's, —smiling; but whether in unconscious happiness or unconscious misery, who alas! can say?

"You see she knows none of us," said her mother. "Neither her papa nor me. Speak to her each of

you, in turn. Perhaps you may be more successful. Agnes,—”

“She will know me,” replied Agnes; “I am certain she will know me:”—and the delightful girl spoke with an energy that was based upon the confidence of that love which subsisted between them. Maria and her brother both burst into tears; but Agnes’s affection rose above the mood of ordinary grief. The confidence that her beloved sister’s tenderness for her would enable her to touch a chord in a heart so utterly her own as Jane’s was, assumed upon this occasion the character of a wild but mournful enthusiasm, that was much more expressive of her attachment than could the loudest and most vehement sorrow.

“If she could but shed tears,” said her mother, wringing her hands.

“She will,” returned Agnes, “she will. Jane,” she exclaimed, “Jane, don’t you know your own Agnes?—your own Agnes, Jane?”

The family waited in silence for half a minute, but their beloved one smiled on, and gave not the slightest token of recognizing either Agnes’ person or her voice. Sometimes her lips moved, and she appeared to be repeating certain words to herself, but in a voice so low and indistinct that no one could catch them.

Agnes’s enthusiasm abandoned her on seeing that that voice to which her own dearest sister ever sweetly and lovingly responded, fell upon her ear as an idle and unmeaning sound. Her face became deadly pale, and her lip quivered, as she again ad-

dressed the unconscious girl. Once more she took her hand in her's, and placing herself before her, put her fingers to her cheek in order to arrest her attention.

"Jane, look upon me; look upon me;—that's a sweet child,—look upon me. Sure I am Agnes—you own Agnes, who will break her heart if my sweet sister doesn't speak to her."

The stricken one raised her head, and looked into her face; but it was, alas! too apparent that she saw her not; for the eye, though smiling, was still vacant. Again her lips moved, and she spoke so as to be understood; turning her eyes at the same time towards the door through which she had entered.

"Yes," she exclaimed, in the same low, placid voice, "yes, he is beautiful! Is he not beautiful? Fatal beauty!—fatal beauty! It is a fatal thing—it is a fatal thing!—but he is very, very beautiful!"

"Jane," said Maria, taking her hand from Agnes's "Jane, speak to Maria, dear. Am not I, too, your own Maria? that loves you not less than—my darling, darling child—they do not live that love you better than your own Maria;—in pity, darling, in pity speak to me!"

The only reply was a smile, that rose into the murmuring music of a low laugh; but this soon ceased, her countenance became troubled, and her finely-pencilled brows knit, as if with an inward sense of physical pain. William, her father, her mother, each successively addressed her, but to no purpose. Though a slight change had taken place, they could not succeed in awakening her reason to

a perception of the circumstances in which she was placed. They only saw that the unity of her thought, or of the image whose beauty veiled the faculties of her mind was broken, and that some other memory, painful in its nature, had come in to disturb the serenity of her unreal happiness; but this, which ought to have given them hope, only alarmed them the more. The father, while these tender and affecting experiments were tried, sat beside her, his eyes laboring under a weight of deep and indescribable calamity, and turning from her face to the faces of those who attempted to recall her reason, with a mute vehemence of sorrow which called up from the depths of their sister's misery a feeling of compassion for the old man whom *she* had so devotedly loved.

"My father's heart is breaking," said William, groaning aloud, and covering his face with his hands. "Father, your face frightens me more than Jane's;—don't, father, don't. She is young,—it will pass away—and father dear where is your reliance upon her—upon her aid!"

"Dear Henry," said his wife, "you should be our support. It is the business of your life to comfort and sustain the afflicted."

"Papa," said Agnes, "come with me for a few minutes, until you recover the shock which— which——"

She stopped, and dropping her head upon the knees of her smiling and apparently happy sister, wept aloud.

"Agnes—Agnes," said William, (they were all in

tears except her father) "Agnes, I am ashamed of you;"—yet his own cheeks were wet, and his voice faltered. "Father, come with me for a little. You will, when alone for a few minutes, bethink you of your duty—for it *is* your duty to bear this not only as becomes a Christian man but a Christian minister, who is bound to give us example as well as precept."

"I know it, William, I know it;—and you shall witness my fortitude, my patience, my resignation under this—this——. I will retire. But *is* she not—alas! I should say, was she not my youngest and my dearest! You admit yourselves she was the *best*."

"Father, come," said William.

"Dear father—dear papa, go with him," said Agnes.

"My father," said Maria, "as he said to *her*, will be himself."

"I will go," said the old man; "I know how to be firm; I will reflect; I will pray; I will weep. I must, I must——"

He pressed the beautiful creature to his bosom, kissed her lips, and as he hung over her, his tears fell in torrents upon her cheeks.

Oh! what a charm must be in sympathy, and in the tears which it sheds over the afflicted, when those of the grey-haired father could soothe his daughter's soul into that sorrow which is so often a relief to the miserable and disconsolate!

When Jane first felt his tears upon her cheeks, she started slightly, and the smile departed from her

countenance. As he pressed her to his heart she struggled a little, and putting her arms out, she turned up her eyes upon his face, and after a long struggle between memory and insanity, at length whispered out 'papa!'"

"You are with me, darling," he exclaimed; "and I am with you, too: and here we are all about you,—your mother, and Agnes, and all."

"Yes, yes," she replied; "but papa,—and where is my mamma?"

"I am here, my own love; here I am. Jane, collect yourself, my treasure. You are overcome with sorrow. The parting from Charles Osborne has been too much for you."

"Perhaps it was wrong to mention his name," whispered William. "May it not occasion a relapse, mother?"

"No," she replied. "I want to touch her heart, and get her to weep if possible."

Her daughter's fingers were again involved in the tangles of her beautiful ringlets, and once more was the sweet but vacant smile returning to her lips.

"May God relieve her and us," said Maria; "the darling child *is* relapsing!"

Agnes felt so utterly overcome, that she stooped, and throwing her arms around her neck wept aloud, with her cheek laid to Jane's.

Again the warmth of her tears upon the afflicted one's face seemed to soothe or awaken her. She looked up, and with a troubled face exclaimed:—

"I hope I am not!—Agnes, you are good, and never practised deceit,—am I? am I?"

"Are you what, love? are you what, Jane, darling?"

"Am I a cast-a-way? I thought I was. I believe I am.—Agnes?"

"Well, dear girl!"

"I am afraid of my papa."

"Why, Jane, should you be afraid of papa. Sure you know how he loves you—doats upon you?"

"Because I practised deceit upon him. I dissembled to him. I sinned, sinned deeply;—blackly, blackly. I shudder to think of it;" and she shuddered while speaking.

"Well, but Jane dear," said her mother, soothingly, "can you not weep for your fault. Tears of repentance can wipe out any crime. Weep, my child, weep, and it will relieve your heart."

"I would like to see my papa," she replied. "I should be glad to hear that he forgives me: how glad! how glad! That's all that troubles your poor Jane; all in the world that troubles her poor heart—I think."

These words were uttered in a tone of such deep and inexpressible misery, and with such an innocent and childlike unconsciousness of the calamity which weighed her down, that no heart possessing common humanity could avoid being overcome.

"Look on me, love," exclaimed her father. "Your papa is here, ready to pity and forgive you."

"William," said Agnes, "a thought strikes me,—the air that Charles played when they first met



has been her favorite ever since : you know it—go get your flute and play it with as much feeling as you can.'

Jane made no reply to her father's words. She sat musing, and once or twice put up her hand to her sidelocks, but immediately withdrew it, and again fell into a reverie. Sometimes her face brightened into the fatal smile, and again became overshadowed with a gloom that seemed to proceed from a feeling of natural grief. Indeed the play of meaning and insanity, as they chased each other over a countenance so beautiful, was an awful sight, even to an indifferent beholder, much less to those who then stood about her.

William in about a minute returned with his flute, and placing himself behind her, commenced the air in a spirit more mournful probably than any in which it had ever before been played. For a long time she noticed it not : that is to say, she betrayed no external marks of attention to it. They could perceive, however, that although she neither moved nor looked around her, yet the awful play of her features ceased, and their expression became more intelligent and natural. At length she sighed deeply several times, though without appearing to hear the music ; and at length, without uttering a word to any one of them, she laid her head upon her father's bosom, and the tears fell in placid torrents down her cheeks. By a signal from his hand, Mr. Sinclair intimated that for the present they should be silent ; and by another addressed to William, that he should play on. He did so, and she

Wept copiously under the influence of that charmed melody for more than twenty minutes.

"It would be well for me," she at length said, "that is, I fear it would, that I had never heard that air, or seen him who first sent its melancholy music to my heart. He is gone; but when—when will he return?"

"Do not take his departure so heavily, dear child," said her father. "If you were acquainted with life and the world you would know that a journey to the Continent is nothing. Two years to one as young as you are will soon pass."

"It would, papa, if I loved him less. But my love for him—my love for him—*that* now is my misery. I must, however, rely upon other strength than my own. Papa, kneel down and pray for me, —and you, mamma, and all of you; for I fear I am myself incapable of praying as I used to do, with an undivided heart."

Her father knelt down, but knowing her weak state of mind, he made his supplication as short and simple as might be consistent with the discharge of a duty so solemn.

"Now," said she, when it was concluded, "will you, mamma, and Agnes, help me to bed; I am very much exhausted, and my heart is sunk as if it were never to beat lightly again. It may yet; I would hope it,—hope it if I could."

They allowed her her own way, and without any allusion whatsoever to Charles, or his departure, more than she had made herself, they embraced her; and in a few minutes she was in bed, and as

was soon evident to Agnes, who watched her, in a sound sleep.

Why is it that those who are dear to us are more tenderly dear to us while asleep than while awake? It is indeed difficult to say; but we know that there are many things in life and nature, especially in the heart and affections, which we feel as distinct truths, without being able to satisfy ourselves why they are so. This is one of them. What parent does not love the offspring more glowingly while the features are composed in sleep? What young husband does not feel his heart melt with a warmer emotion, on contemplating the countenance of his youthful wife, when that countenance is overshadowed with the placid but somewhat mournful beauty of repose?

When the family understood from Agnes that Jane had fallen into a slumber, they stole up quietly, and standing about her, each looked upon her with a long gaze of relief and satisfaction; for they knew that sleep would repair the injury which the trial of that day had wrought upon a mind so delicately framed as her's. We question not but where there is beauty it is still more beautiful in sleep. The passions are then at rest, and the still harmony of the countenance unbroken by the jarring discords and vexations of waking life; every feature then falls into its natural place, and renders the symmetry of the face chaster, whilst its general expression breathes more of that tender and pensive character, which constitutes the highest order of beauty.

Jane's countenance, in itself so exquisitely lovely, was now an object of deep and melancholy interest. Upon it might be observed faint traces of those contending emotions whose struggle had been on that day so nearly fatal to her mind for ever. The smile left behind it a faint and dying light, like the dim radiance of a spring evening when melting into dusk;—whilst the secret dread of becoming a cast-away, and the still abiding consciousness of having deceived her father, blended into the languid serenity of her face a slight expression of the pain they had occasioned her while awake.

Unhappy girl! There she lay in her innocence and beauty like a summer lake whose clear waters have settled into stillness after a recent storm; reflecting, as they pass, the clouds now softened into milder forms, which had but a little time before so deeply agitated them.

"Oh no wonder," said her father, "that the boy who loves her should say he would not leave her, and that separation would break down the strength of his heart and spirit. A fairer thing—a purer being never closed her eyelids upon the cares and trials of life. Light may those cares be, oh! beloved of our hearts; and refreshing the slumbers that are upon you; and may the blessing and merciful providence of God guard and keep you from evil! Amen! Amen!"

Maria on this occasion was deeply affected. Jane's arm lay outside the coverlid, and her sister observed that her white and beautiful fingers were affected from time to time with slight starting

twitches, apparently nervous. This, contrasted with the stillness of her face, impressed the girl with an apprehension that the young mourner, though asleep, was still suffering pain; but when her father spoke and blessed her, she felt her heart getting full, and bending over Jane she imprinted a kiss upon her cheek;—affectionate, indeed, was that kiss, but timid and light as the fall of the thistle-down upon a leaf of the rose or the lily. When she withdrew her lips, a tear was visible on the cheek of the sleeper—a circumstance which, slight as it was, gave a character of inexpressible love and tenderness to the act. They then quietly left her, with the exception of Agnes, and all were relieved and delighted, at seeing her enjoy a slumber so sound and refreshing.

The next morning they arose earlier than usual, in order to watch the mood in which she might awake; and when Agnes, who had been her bed-fellow, came down stairs, every eye was turned upon her with an anxiety proportioned to the disastrous consequences that might result from any unfavorable turn in her state of feeling.

“Agnes,” said her father, “how is she?—in what state?—in what frame of mind?”

“She appears much distressed, papa—feels conscious that Charles is gone—but as yet has made no allusion to their parting yesterday. Indeed I do not think she remembers it. She is already up, and begged this moment of me to leave her to herself for a little.”

“I want strength, Agnes,” said she, “and I know

there is but one source from which I can obtain it. Advice, consolation, and sympathy, I may and will receive here; but strength—strength is what I most stand in need of, and that only can proceed from Him who gives rest to the heavy laden.’

“‘You feel too deeply, Jane,’ I replied; ‘you should try to be firm.’

“‘I do try, Agnes; but tell me, have I not been unwell, *very* unwell?’

“‘Your feelings, dear Jane, overcame you yesterday, as was natural they should—but now that you are calm, of course you will not yield to despondency or melancholy. Your dejection, though at present deep, will soon pass away, and ere many days you will be as cheerful as ever.’

“‘I hope so; but Charles is gone, is he not?’

“‘But you know it was necessary that he should travel for his health; besides, have you not formed a plan of correspondence with each other?’”

“Then,” proceeded Agnes, “she pulled out the locket which contained his hair, and after looking on it for about a minute, she kissed it, pressed it to her heart, and whilst in the act of doing so, a few tears ran down her cheeks.”

“I am glad of that,” observed her mother; “it is a sign that this heavy grief will not long abide upon her.”

“She then desired me,” continued Agnes, “to leave her, and expressed a sense of her own weakness, and the necessity of spiritual support, as I

have already told you. I am sure the worst is over."

"Blessed be God, I trust it is," said her father; "but whilst I live, I will never demand from her such a proof of her obedience as that which I imposed upon her yesterday. She will soon be down to breakfast, and we must treat the dear girl kindly, and gently, and affectionately; tenderly, tenderly must she be treated; and, children, much depends upon you—keep her mind engaged. You have music—play more than you do—read more—walk more—sing more. I myself will commence a short course of lectures upon the duties and character of women, in the single and married state of life; alternately with which I will also give you a short course upon *Belles Letters*. If this engages and relieves her mind, it will answer an important purpose; but at all events it will be time well spent, and that is something."

When Jane appeared at breakfast, she was paler than usual; but then the expression of her countenance, though pensive, was natural. Mr. Sinclair placed her between himself and her mother, and each kissed her in silence ere she sat down.

"I have been very unwell yesterday, papa. I know I must have been; but I have made my mind up to bear his absence with fortitude—not that it is his mere absence which I feel so severely, but an impression that some calamity is to occur either to him or me."

"Impressions of that kind, my dear child, are the result of low spirits, and a nervous habit. You

should not suffer your mind to be disturbed by them; for, when it is weakened by suffering, they gather strength, and sometimes become formidable."

"There is no bearing my calamity, papa, as it ought to be borne, without the grace of God, and you know we must pray to be made worthy of that. I dare say that if I am resigned and submissive that my usual cheerfulness will gradually return. I have confidence in heaven, papa, but none in my own strength, or I should rather say in my own weakness. My attachment to Charles resembles a disease more than a healthy and rational passion. I know it is excessive, and indeed I think its excess is a disease. Yet it is singular I do not fear my heart, papa, but I do my head; here is where the danger lies—here—here;" and as she spoke, she applied her hand to her forehead, and gave a faint smile of melancholy apprehension.

"Wait, Jane," said her brother; "just wait for a week or ten days, and if you don't scold yourself for being now so childish, why never call me brother again. Sure I understand these things like a philosopher. I have been three times in love myself."

Jane looked at him, and a faint sparkle of her usual good nature lit up her countenance.

"Didn't I tell you," he proceeded, addressing them—"look; why I'll soon have her as merry as a kid."

"But who were you in love with, William," asked Agnes.

"I was smitten first with Kate Sharp, the Apple-



woman, in consideration of her charming method of giving me credit for fruit when I was a school-boy, and had no money. I thought her a very interesting woman, I assure you, and proffered my suit to her with signal success. I say *signal*, for you know she was then, as she is now, very hard of hearing, and I was forced to pay my suit to her by signs."

"Dear William," said she, "I see your motive, and love you for it; but it is too soon—my spirits are not yet in tone for mirth or pleasantry—but they will be—they will be. I know it is too bad to permit an affliction that is merely sentimental to bear me down in this manner; but I cannot help it, and you must all only look on me as a weak foolish girl, and forgive me, and pity me. Mamma, I will lie down again, for I feel I am not well; and oh, papa, if you ever prayed with fervor and sincerity, pray for strength to your own Jane, and happiness to her stricken heart."

She then retired, and for the remainder of that day confined herself partly to her bed, and altogether to her chamber; and it was observed, that from the innocent caprices of a sickly spirit, she called Agnes, and her mother, and Maria—sometimes one, and sometimes another—and had them always about her, each to hear a particular observation that occurred to her, or to ask some simple question, of no importance to any person except to one whose mind had become too sensitive upon the subject which altogether engrossed it. Towards evening she had a long fit of weeping, after which she appeared

more calm and resigned. She made her mother read her a chapter in the Bible, and expressed a resolution to bear every thing she said, as became one she hoped not *yet* beyond the reach of Divine grace and Christian consolation.

After a second night's sleep she arose considerably relieved from the gloomy grief which had nearly wrought such a dreadful change in her intellect. Her father's plan of imperceptibly engaging her attention by instruction and amusement was carried into effect by him and her sisters, with such singular success, that at the lapse of a month she was almost restored to her wonted spirits. We say almost, because it was observed that, notwithstanding her apparent serenity, she never afterwards reached the same degree of cheerfulness, nor so richly exhibited in her complexion that purple glow, the hue of which lies like a visible charm upon the cheek of youthful beauty.

Time, however, is the best philosopher, and our heroine found that ere many weeks she could, with the exception of slight intervals, look back upon the day of separation from Osborne, and forward to the expectation of his return, with a calmness of spirit by no means displeasing to one who had placed such unlimited confidence in his affection. His first letter soothed, relieved, transported her. Indeed, so completely was she overcome on receiving it, that the moment it was placed in her hands, her eyes seemed to have been changed into light, her limbs trembled with the agitation of a happiness so intense; and she at length sank into an

ecstasy of joy, which was only relieved by a copious flood of tears.

For two years after this their correspondence was as regular as the uncertain motions of a tourist could permit it. Jane appeared to be happy, and she was so within the limits of an enjoyment, narrowed in its character by the contingency arising from time and distance, and the other probabilities of disappointment which a timid heart and a pensive fancy will too often shape into certainty. Fits of musing and melancholy she often had without any apparent cause, and when gently taken to task, or remonstrated with concerning them, she had only replied by weeping, or admitted that she could by no means account for her depression, except by saying that she believed it to be a defect in the habit and temper of her mind.

His tutor's letters, both to Charles's father and her's, were nearly as welcome to Jane as his own. He, in fact, could say that for his pupil, which his pupil's modesty would not permit him to say for himself. Oh! how her heart glowed, and conscious pride sparkled in her eye, when that worthy man described the character of manly beauty which time and travel had gradually given to his person! And when his progress in knowledge and accomplishments, and the development of his taste and judgment became the theme of his tutor's panegyric, she could not listen without betraying the vehement enthusiasm of a passion, which absence and time had only strengthened in her bosom.

These letters induced a series of sensations at

since novel and delightful, and such as were calculated to give zest to an attachment thus left to support itself, not from the presence of its object, but from the memory of tenderness that had already gone by. She knew Charles Osborne only as a boy—a beautiful boy it is true—and he knew her only as a graceful creature, whose extremely youthful appearance made it difficult whether to consider her merely as an advanced girl, or as a young female who had just passed into the first stage of womanhood. But now her fancy and affection had both room to indulge in that vivacious play which delights to paint a lover absent under such circumstances in the richest hues of imaginary beauty.

“How will he look,” she would say to her sister Agnes, “when he returns a young man, settled into the fulness of his growth? Taller he will be, and much more manly in his deportment. But is there no danger, Agnes, of his losing in grace, in delicacy of complexion, in short, of losing in beauty what he may gain otherwise?”

“No, my dear, not in the least; you will be ten times prouder of him after his return than you ever were. There is something much more noble and dignified in the love of a man than in that of a boy, and you will feel this on seeing him.”

“In that case, Agnes, I shall have to fall in love with him over again, and to fall in love with the same individual twice, will certainly be rather a novel case—a double passion, at least, you will grant, Agnes.”

“But *he* will experience sensations quite as singu-

lar on seeing you, when he returns. You are as much changed—improved I mean—in your person, as he can be for his life. If he is now a fine, full-grown young man, you are a tall, elegant—I don't want to flatter you, Jane,—I need not say graceful, for *that* you always were, but I may add with truth, a majestic young woman. Why, you will scarcely know each other."

"You *do* flatter me, Agnes; but am I *so much* improved?"

"Indeed you are quite a different girl from what you were when he saw you."

"I am glad of it; but as I told him once, it is on his account that I *am* so glad; do you know, Agnes, I never was vain of my beauty until I saw Charles?"

"Did you ever feel proud in being beautiful in the eyes of another, Jane?"

"No, I never did—why should I?"

"Well, that is not vanity—it is only love visible in a different aspect, and not the least amiable either, my dear."

"Well, I should be much more melancholy than I am, were not my fancy so often engaged in picturing to myself the change which may be on him when he returns. The feeling it occasions is novel and agreeable, sometimes, indeed, delightful, and so far sustains me when I am inclined to be gloomy. But believe me, Agnes, I could love Charles Osborne even if he were not handsome. I could love him for his mind, his principles, and especially for his faithful and constant heart."

"And for all these he would deserve your love,

but you remember what you told me once: it seems he has not yet seen a girl that *he* thinks more handsome than you are. Did you not mention to me that he said when he did, he would cease to write to you and cease to love you? You see he *is* constant."

"Yes; but did I not tell you the sense in which he meant it?"

"Yes; and now you throw a glance at yourself in the glass! Oh Jane, Jane, the best of us and the freest from imperfection is not without a little pride and vanity; but don't be too confident, my saucy beauty; consider that you complained to William yesterday, about the unusual length of time that has elapsed since you received his last letter, and yet he could write to his fa—— What, what, dear girl, what's the matter? you are as pale as death."

"Because, Agnes, I never think of that but my heart and spirits sink. It has been one of the secret causes of my occasional depressions ever since he went. I cannot tell why, but from the moment the words were spoken, I have not been without a presentiment of evil."

"Even upon your own showing Jane, that is an idle and groundless impression, and unworthy the affection which you know, and which we all know he bears you; dismiss it, dear Jane, dismiss it, and do not give yourself the habit of creating imaginary evils."

"I know I am prone to such a habit, and am probably too much of a visionary for my own happiness; but setting that gloomy presentiment aside,

have you not, Agnes, been struck with several hints in his letters, both to me and his father, unfavorable to the state of his health."

"That you will allow, could not be very ill, when he was able to continue his travels."

"True, but according to his own admission his arrangements were frequently broken up, by the fact of his being 'unwell,' and 'not in a condition to travel,' and so did not reach the places in time to which he had requested me to direct many of my letters. I fear, Agnes, that his health has not been so much improved by the air of the Continent as we hoped it would."

"I have only to say this, Jane, that if he does not appreciate your affection as he ought to do, then God forgive him. He will be guilty of a crime against the purest attachment of the best of hearts, as well as against truth and honor. I hoped he may be worthy of you, and I am sure he will. He is now in Bath, however, and will soon be with us."

"I am divided, Agnes, by two principles—if they may be called such—or if you will, by two moods of mind, or states of feeling; one of them is faith and trust in his affection—how can I doubt it?—the other is my malady, I believe, a gloom, an occasional despondency for which I cannot account, and which I am not able to shake off. My faith and trust, however, will last, and his return will dispel the other."

This, in fact, was the true state of the faithful girl's heart. From the moment Osborne went to travel, her affection, though full of the tenderest enthu-

siasm, lay under the deep shadow of that gloom, which was occasioned by the first, and we may say the only act of insincerity she was ever guilty of towards her father. The reader knows that even this act was not a deliberate one, but merely the hurried evasion of a young and bashful girl, who, had her sense of moral delicacy been less acute, might have never bestowed a moment's subsequent consideration upon it. Let our fair young readers, however, be warned even by this very slight deviation from truth, and let them also remember that one act of dissimulation may, in the little world of their own moral sentiments and affections, lay the foundation for calamities under which their hopes and their happiness in consequence of that act may absolutely perish. Still are we bound to say that Jane's deportment during the period stipulated upon for Osborne's absence was admirably decorous, and replete with moral beauty. Her moments of enjoyment derived from his letters, were fraught with an innocent simplicity of delight in fine keeping with a heart so full of youthful fervor and attachment. And when her imagination became occasionally darkened by that *gloom* which she termed her malady, nothing could be more impressive than the tone of deep and touching piety which mingled with and elevated her melancholy into a cheerful solemnity of spirit, that swayed by its pensive dignity the habits and affections of her whole family.

'Tis true she was one of a class rarely to be found among even the highest of her own sex, and her



attachment was consequently that of a heart utterly incapable of loving twice. Her first affection was too steadfast and decisive ever to be changed, and at the same time too full and unreserved to maintain the materials for a second passion. The impression she received was too deep ever to be erased. She might weep—she might mourn—she might sink—her soul might be bowed down to the dust—her heart might break—she might die—but she never, never, could love again. That heart was his palace, where the monarch of her affections reigned—but remove his throne, and it became the sepulchre of her own hopes—the ruin, haunted by the moping brood of her own sorrows. Often, indeed, did her family wonder at the freshness of memory manifested in the character of her love for Osborne. There was nothing transient, nothing forgotten, nothing perishable in her devotion to him. In truth, it had something of divinity in it. Every thing past, and much also of the future was present to her. Osborne breathed and lived at the expiration of two years, just as he had done the day before he set out on his travels. In her heart he existed as an undying principle, and the duration of her love for him seemed likely to be limited only by those laws of nature, which, in the course of time, carry the heart beyond the memory of all human affections.

It would, indeed, be almost impossible to see a creature so lovely and angelic, as was our heroine, about the period when Osborne was expected to return. Retaining all the graceful elasticity of

motion that characterized her when first introduced to our readers, she was now taller and more majestic in her person, rounder and with more symmetry in her figure, and also more conspicuous for the singular ease and harmony of her general deportment. Her hair, too, now grown to greater luxuriance, had become several shades deeper, and, of course, was much more rich than when Charles saw it last. But if there was any thing that more than another, gave an expression of tenderness to her beauty, it was the under-tone of color—the slightly perceptible paleness which marked her complexion as that of a person whose heart though young had already been made acquainted with some early sorrow.

Had her lover then seen her, and witnessed the growth of charms that had taken place during his absence, he and she might both, alas, have experienced another and a kinder destiny.

The time at length arrived when Charles, as had been settled upon by both their parents, was expected to return. During the three months previous he had been at Bath, accompanied of course by his friend and tutor. Up until a short time previous to his arrival there, his communications to his parents and to Jane were not only punctual and regular, but remarkable for the earnest spirit of dutiful affection and fervid attachment which they breathed to both. It is true that his father had, during the whole period of his absence, been cognizant of that which the vigilance of Jane's love for him only suspected—I allude to the state of his health,

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which it seems occasionally betrayed symptoms of his hereditary complaint.

This gave Mr. Osborne deep concern, for he had hoped that so long a residence in more genial climates would have gradually removed from his son's constitution that tendency to decline which was so much dreaded by them all. Still he was gratified to hear, that with the exception of those slight recurrences, the boy grew fast and otherwise with a healthy energy into manhood. The principles he had set out with were unimpaired by the influence of continental profligacy. His mind was enlarged, his knowledge greatly extended, and his taste and manners polished to a degree so unusual, that he soon became the ornament of every circle in which he moved. His talents now ripe and cultivated, were not only of a high, but also of a striking and brilliant character—much too commanding and powerful, as every one said, to be permitted to sink into the obscurity of private life.

This language was not without its due impression on young Osborne's mind; for his tutor could observe that soon after his return to England he began to have fits of musing, and was often abstracted, if not absolutely gloomy. He could also perceive a disinclination to write home, for which he felt it impossible to account. At first he attributed this to ill health, or to those natural depressions which frequently precede or accompany it; but at length on seeing his habitual absences increase, he inquired in a tone of friendly sympathy, too sincere to be doubted, why it was that a

change so unusual had become so remarkably visible in his spirits.

"I knew not," replied Osborne, "that it was so; I myself have not observed what you speak of."

"Your manner, indeed, is much changed," said his friend; "you appear to me, and I dare say to others, very like a man whose mind is engaged upon the consideration of some subject that is deeply painful to him, and of which he knows not how to dispose. If it be so, my dear Osborne, command my advice, my sympathy, my friendship."

"I assure you, my dear friend, I was perfectly unconscious of this. But that I *have* for some time past been thinking more seriously than usual of the position in society which I ought to select, I grant you. You are pleased to flatter me with the possession of talents that you say might enable any man to reach a commanding station in public life. Now, for what purpose are talents given? or am I justified in slinking away into obscurity when I might create my own fortune, perhaps my own rank, by rendering some of the noblest services to my country. That wish to leave behind one a name that cannot die, is indeed a splendid ambition!"

"I thought," replied the other, "that you had already embraced views of a different character, entered into by your father to promote *your own happiness*."

Osborne started, blushed, and for more than half a minute returned no answer. "True," said he at last, "true, *I had forgotten that*."

His tutor immediately perceived that an ambition not unnatural, indeed, to a young man possessing such fine talents, had strongly seized upon his heart, and knowing as he did his attachment to Jane, he would have advised his immediately return home, had it not been already determined on, in consequence of medical advice, that he himself should visit Bath for the benefit of his health, and his pupil could by no arguments be dissuaded from accompanying him.

This brief view of Osborne's intentions, at the close of the period agreed on for his return, was necessary to explain an observation made by Agnes in the last dialogue which we have given between herself and her younger sister. We allude to the complaint which she playfully charged Jane with having made to her brother concerning the length of time which had elapsed since she last heard from her lover. The truth is, that with the exception of Jane herself, both families were even then deeply troubled in consequence of a letter directed by Charles's tutor to Mr. Osborne. That letter was the last which the amiable gentleman ever wrote, for he had not been in Bath above a week when he sank suddenly under a disease of the heart, to which he had for some years been subject. His death, which distressed young Osborne very much, enabled him, however, to plead the necessity of attending to his friend's obsequies, in reply to his father's call on him to return to his family. The next letter stated that he would not lose a moment in complying with his wishes, as no motive existed

to detain him from home, and the third expressed the uncommon benefit which he had, during his brief residence there, experienced from the use of the waters. Against this last argument the father had nothing to urge. His son's health was to him a consideration paramount to every other, and he wrote to Charles that if he found himself improved either by the air or waters of Bath, he should not hurry his return as he had intended. "Only write to your friends," said he, "*they* are as anxious for the perfect establishment of your health as I am."

This latter correspondence between Mr. Osborne and his son, was submitted to Mr. Sinclair, that it might be mentioned to serve as an apology for Charles's delay in replying to her last letter. This step was suggested by Mr. Sinclair himself, who dreaded the consequences which any appearance of neglect might have upon a heart so liable to droop as that of his gentle daughter. Jane, who *was* easily depressed, but not suspicious, smiled at the simplicity of her papa, as she said, in deeming it necessary to make any apology for Charles Osborne's not writing to her by return of post.

"It will be time enough," she added, "when his letters get cool, and come but seldom, to make excuses for him. Surely, my dear papa, if any one blamed him, I myself would be, and ought to be the first to defend him."

"Yet," observed William, "you could complain to me about his letting a letter of yours stand over a fortnight, before he answered it. Jane—Jane—there's no knowing you girls; particularly when

you're in love; but, indeed, then you don't know yourselves, so how should we?"

"But, papa," she added, looking earnestly upon him; "it is rather strange that you are so anxious to apologise for Charles. I cannot question my papa, and I shall not; but yet upon second thoughts, it is very strange."

"No, my love, but I would not have you a day uneasy."

"Well," she replied, musing—but with a keen eye bent alternately upon him and William; "it is a simple case, I myself have a very ready solution for his want of punctuality, if it can be called such, or if it continue such."

"And pray what is it, Jane," asked William.

"Excuse me, dear William—if I told you it might reach him, and then he might shape his conduct to meet it—I may mention it some day, though; but I hope there will never be occasion. Papa, don't you ask me, because if you do, I shall feel it my duty to tell you; and I would rather not, sir, except you press me. But why after all, should I make a secret of it. It is papa, the test of all things, as well as of Charles's punctuality—for, of his affection I will never doubt. It is time—time; but indeed I wish you had not spoken to me about it; I was not uneasy."

The poor girl judged Osborne through a misapprehension which, had she known more of life, or even reflected upon his neglect in writing to her, would have probably caused her to contemplate his conduct in a different light. She thought because

his letters were nearly as frequent since his return to England, as they had been during his tour on the continent, that the test of his respect and attachment was sustained. In fact, she was ignorant that he had written several letters of late to his own family, without having addressed to her a single line; or even mentioned her name, and this circumstance was known to them all, with the exception of herself, as was the tutor's previous letter, of which she had never heard.

It was no wonder, therefore, that her father, who was acquainted with this, and entertained such serious apprehensions for his daughter's state of mind, should feel anxious, that until Osborne's conduct were better understood, no doubt of his sincerity should reach the confiding girl's heart. The old man, however, unconsciously acted upon his own impressions rather than on Jane's knowledge of what had occurred. In truth, he forgot that the actual state of the matter was unknown to her, and the consequence was, that in attempting to efface an impression that did not exist, he alarmed her suspicion by his mysterious earnestness of manner, and thereby created the very uneasiness he wished to remove.

From this day forward, Jane's eye became studiously vigilant of the looks and motions of the family. Her melancholy returned, but it was softer and serener than it had ever been before; so did the mild but pensive spirit of devotion which had uniformly accompanied it. The sweetness of her manner was irresistible, & not affecting, for there



breathed through the composure of her countenance an air of mingled sorrow and patience, so finely blended, that it was difficult to determine, on looking at her, whether she secretly rejoiced or mourned.

A few days more brought another letter from Osborne to his father, which contained a proposal for which the latter, in consequence of the tutor's letter, was not altogether unprepared. It was a case put to the father for the purpose of ascertaining whether, if he, Charles, were offered an opportunity of appearing in public life, he would recommend him to accept it. He did not say that such an opening had really presented itself, but he strongly urged his father's permission to embrace it if it should.

This communication was immediately laid before Mr. Sinclair, who advised his friend, ere he took any other step, or hazarded an opinion upon it, to require from Charles an explicit statement of the motives which induced him to solicit such a sanction. "Until we know what he means," said he, "it is impossible for us to know how to advise him. That he has some ambitious project in view, is certain. Mr. Harvey (his tutor's) letter and this both prove it."

"But in the meantime, we must endeavor to put such silly projects out of his head, my dear friend. I am more troubled about that sweet girl, than about any thing else. I cannot understand his neglect of her."

"Few, indeed, are worthy of that angel," replied her father, sighing; "I hope he may. If Charles,

after what has passed, sports with her happiness, he will one day have a fearful reckoning of it, unless he permits his conscience to become altogether seared."

"It cannot happen," replied the other; "I know my boy, his heart is noble; no, no, he is incapable of dishonor, much less of perfidy so black as that would be. In my next letter, however, I shall call upon him to explain himself upon that subject, as well as the other, and if he replies by an evasion, I shall instantly command him home."

They then separated, with a feeling of deep but fatherly concern, one anxious for the honor of his son, and the other trembling for the happiness of his daughter.

Mr. Sinclair was a man in whose countenance could be read all the various emotions that either exalted or disturbed his heart. If he felt joy his eye became irradiated with a benignant lustre, that spoke at once of happiness; and, when depressed by care or sorrow, it was easy to see by the serious composure of his face, that something troubled or disturbed him. Indeed, this candor of countenance is peculiar to those only who have not schooled their faces into hypocrisy. After his return from the last interview with Mr. Osborne, his family perceived at a glance that something more than usually painful lay upon his mind; and such was the affectionate sympathy by which they caught each other's feelings, that every countenance, save one, became partially overshadowed. Jane, although her eye was the first and quickest to notice this

anxiety of her father, exhibited no visible proof of a penetration so acute and lively. The serene light that beamed so mournfully from her placid but melancholy brow, was not darkened by what she saw; on the contrary, that brow became, if possible, more serene; for in truth, the gentle enthusiast had already formed a settled plan of exalted resignation that was designed to sustain her under an apprehension far different from that which Osborne's ambitious speculations in life would have occasioned her to feel had she known them.

"I see," said she with a smile, "that my papa has no good news to tell. A letter has come to his father, but none to me; but you need not fear for my firmness, papa. I know from whence to expect support; indeed, from the beginning I knew that I would require it. You often affectionately chid me for entertaining apprehensions too gloomy; but now they are not gloomy, because, if what I surmise be true, Charles and I will not be so long separated as you imagine. The hope of this, papa, is my consolation."

"Why, what do you surmise, my love," asked her father.

"That Charles is gone, perhaps irretrievably gone in decline; you know it is the hereditary complaint of his family. What else could, or would—yes, papa, or *ought* to keep him so long from home—from his friends—from me. Yes, indeed," she added with a smile, "from me, papa—from his own Jane Sinclair, and he so near us, in England, and the time determined on for his return expired."

"But you know, Jane," said her father, gratified to find that her suspicion took a wrong direction, "the air of Bath, he writes, is agreeing with him."

"I hope it may, papa; I hope it may; but you may rest assured, that whatever happens, the lesson you have taught me, will, aided by divine support, sustain my soul, so long as the frail tenement in which it is lodged may last. That will not be long."

"True religion, my love, is always cheerful, and loves to contemplate the brighter side of every human event. I do not like to see my dear child so calm, nor her countenance shaded by melancholy so fixed as that I have witnessed on it of late."

"Eternity, papa—a happy eternity, what is it, but the brighter side of human life—here we see only as in a glass darkly; there in our final destiny, we reach the fulness of our happiness. I am not melancholy, but resigned; and resignation has a peace peculiar to itself; a repose which draws us gently, for a little time, out of the memory of our sorrows; but without refreshing the heart—without refreshing the heart. No, papa, I am not melancholy—I am not melancholy; I could bear Charles's death, and look up to my God for strength and support under it; but," she added, shaking her head, with a smile marked by something of a wild meaning, "if he could forget me for another,—no I will not say for another, but if he could only forget me, and his vows of undying affection, then indeed—then—then—papa—ha!—no—no—he could *not*—he *could not*."

This conversation, when repeated to the family

deeply distressed them, involved in doubt and uncertainty as they were with respect to Osborne's ultimate intentions. Until a reply, however, should be received to his father's letter which was written expressly to demand an explanation on that point, they could only soothe the unhappy girl in the patient sorrow which they saw gathering in her heart. That, however, which alarmed them most, was her insuperable disrelish to any thing in the shape of consolation or sympathy. This, to them, was indeed a new trait in the character of one who had heretofore been so anxious to repose the weight of her sufferings upon the bosoms of those who loved her. Her chief companion now was Ariel, her dove, to which she was seen to address herself with a calm, smiling aspect, not dissimilar to the languid cheerfulness of an invalid, who might be supposed as yet incapable from physical weakness to indulge in a greater display of animal spirits. Her walks too, were now all solitary, with the exception of her mute companion, and it was observed that she never, in a single instance, was known to traverse any spot over which she and Osborne had not walked together. Here she would linger, and pause, and muse, and address Ariel, as if the beautiful creature were capable of comprehending the tenor of her language.

"Ariel," said she one day, speaking to the bird; "there is the yew tree, under which your preserver and I first disclosed our love. The yew tree, sweet bird, is the emblem of death, and so it will happen; for Charles is dying, I know—I feel that he will

die; and I will die, early; we will both die early; for I would not be able to live here after him, Ariel, and how could I? Yet I should like to see him once—*once* before he dies; to see him, Ariel, in the fulness of his beauty; my eye to rest upon him once more; and then I could die smiling.”

She then sat down under the tree, and in a voice replete with exquisite pathos and melody sang the plaintive air which Osborne had played on the evening when the first rapturous declaration of their passion was made. This incident with the bird also occurred much about the same hour of the day, a remembrance which an association, uniformly painful to her moral sense, now revived with peculiar power, for she started and became pale.

“Alas, my sweet bird,” she exclaimed, “what is this; I shall be absent from evening worship again—but I will not prevaricate *now*; why—why is this spot to be fatal to me? Come, Ariel, come: perhaps I may not be late.”

She hastened home with a palpitating heart, and unhappily arrived only in time to find the family rising from prayer.

As she stood and looked upon them, she smiled, but a sudden paleness at the same instant overspread her face, which gave to her smile an expression we are utterly incompetent to describe.

“I *am* late,” she exclaimed, “and have neglected a solemn and a necessary duty. To me, to me, papa, how necessary is that duty.”

“It is equally so to us all, my child,” replied her father; “but,” he added, in order to reconcile her

to an omission which had occasioned her to suffer so much pain before; "we did not forget to pray for you, Jane. With respect to your absence, we know it was unintentional. Your mind is troubled, my love, and do not, let me beg of you, dwell upon minor points of that kind, so as to interrupt the singleness of heart with which you ought to address God. You know, darling, you can pray in your own room."

She mused for some minutes, and at length said, "I would be glad to preserve that singleness of heart, but I fear I will not be able to do so long."

"If you would stay more with us, darling," observed her mamma, "and talk and chat more with Maria and Agnes, as you used to do, you would find your spirits improved. You are not so cheerful as we would wish to see you."

"Perhaps I ought to do that, mamma; indeed I know I ought, because you wish it."

"We all wish it," said Agnes, "Jane dear, why keep aloof from us? Who in the world loves you as we do; and why would you not, as you used to do, allow us to cheer you, to support you, or to mourn and weep with you; anything—anything," said the admirable girl, "rather than keep your heart from ours;" and as she spoke, the tears fell fast down her cheeks.

"Dear Agnes," said Jane, putting her arm about her sister's neck, and looking up mournfully into her face; "I cannot weep for myself—I cannot weep even with you; you know I love you—*how* I love you—oh how I love you all; but I cannot tell why

it is—society, even the society of them I love best, disturbs me, and you know not the pleasure—melancholy I grant it to be, but you know not the pleasure that comes to me from solitude. To me—to me there is a charm in it ten times more soothing to my heart than all the power of human consolation.”

“But why so melancholy at all, Jane,” said Maria, “surely there is no just cause for it.”

She smiled as she replied, “Why am I melancholy, Maria?—why? why should I not? Do I not read the approaching death of Charles Osborne in the gloom of every countenance about me? Why do you whisper to each other that which you will not let me hear? Why is there a secret and anxious, and a mysterious intercourse between this family and his, of the purport of which I am kept ignorant—and I alone?”

“But suppose Charles Osborne is not sick,” said William; “suppose he was never in better health than he is at this moment—” he saw his father’s hand raised, and paused, then added, carelessly, “for supposition’s sake I say merely.”

“But you must not suppose that, William,” she replied, starting, “unless you wish to blight your sister. On what an alternative then, would you force a breaking heart. If not sick, if not dying, where is he? I require him—I demand him. My heart,” she proceeded, rising up and speaking with vehemence—“my heart calls for him—shouts aloud in its agony—shouts aloud—shouts aloud for him. He is, he is sick; the malady of his family is upon



him; he is ill—he is dying; it must be so; ay, and it *shall* be so; I can bear that, I can bear him to die, but never to become faithless to a heart like mine. But I am foolish,” she added, after a pause, occasioned by exhaustion; “Oh, my dear William, why, by idle talk, thus tamper with your poor affectionate sister’s happiness? I know you meant no harm, but oh, William, William, do it no more.”

“I only put it, dear Jane, I only put it as a mere case,”—the young man was evidently cut to the heart, and could not for some moments speak.

She saw his distress, and going over to him, took his hand and said, “Don’t, William, don’t; it is nothing but merely one of your good-humored attempts to make your sister cheerful. There,” she added, kissing his cheek; “there is a kiss for you; the kiss of peace let it be, and forgiveness; but I have nothing to forgive you for, except too much affection for an unhappy sister, who, I believe, is likely to be troublesome enough to you all; but, perhaps not long—not long.”

There were few dry eyes in the room, as she uttered the last words.

“I do not like to see you weep,” she added, “when I could have wept myself, and partaken of your tears, it was rather a relief to me than otherwise. It seems, however, that my weeping days are past; do not, oh do not—you trouble me, and I want to compose my mind for a performance of the solemn act which I have this evening neglected. Mamma, kiss me, and pray for me; I love you well and tenderly, mamma; I am sure you know I do.”

The sorrowing mother caught her to her bosom, and, after kissing her passive lips, burst out into a sobbing fit of grief.

"Oh, my daughter, my daughter," she exclaimed, still clasping her to her heart, "and is it come to this! Oh that we had never seen him!"

"This, my dear," said Mr. Sinclair to his wife, "is wrong; indeed, it is weakness; you know she wants to compose her mind for prayer."

"I do, papa; they must be more firm; I need to pray. I know my frailties, you know them too, sir; I concealed them from you as long as I could, but their burthen was too heavy for my heart; bless me now, before I go; I will kneel."

The sweet girl knelt beside him, and he placed his hand upon her stooping head, and blessed her. She then raised herself, and looking up to him with a singular expression of wild sweetness beaming in her eyes, she said, leaning her head again upon his breast,

"There are two bosoms, on which, I trust, I and my frailties can repose with hope; I know I shall soon pass from the one to the other—

"The bosom of my *father* and my *God*."  
Will not they be sweet, papa?"

She spoke thus with a smile of such unutterable sweetness, her beautiful eyes gazing innocently up into her father's countenance, that the heart of the old man was shaken through every fibre. He saw, however, what must be encountered, and was resolved to act a part worthy of the religion he professed. He arose, and taking her hand in his, said, "You wish

to pray, dearest love; that is right; your head hat been upon my bosom, and I blessed you; go now, and, with a fervent heart, address yourself to the throne of grace; in doing this, my sweet child, piously and earnestly, you *will* pass from my bosom to the bosom of your God. Cast yourself upon Him my love; above all things, cast yourself with humble hope and earnest supplication upon *His*, This, my child, indeed is sweet; and you will find it so; come, darling, come."

He led her out of the room, and after a few words more of affectionate advice, left her to that solitude for which he hoped the frame of mind in which she then appeared was suitable.

"Her sense of religion," he said, after returning to the family, "is not only delicate, but deep; her piety is fervent and profound. I do not therefore despair but religion will carry her through whatever disappointment Charles's flighty enthusiasm may occasion her."

"I wish, papa," said Agnes, "I could think so. As she herself said, she might bear his death, for that would involve no act of treachery, of falsehood on his part; but to find that he is capable of forgetting their betrothed vows, sanctioned as they were by the parents of both—indeed, papa, if such a thing happen——"

"I should think it will not," observed her mother; "Charles has, as you have just said, enthusiasm; now will not that give an impulse to his love, as well as to his ambition?"

"But if ambition, my dear, has become the pre

dominant principle in his character, it will draw to its own support all that nourished his other passions. Love is never strong, where ambition exists—nor ambition where there is love.”

“I cannot entertain the thought of Charles Osborne being false to her,” said Maria; “his passion for her was more like idolatry than love.”

“He is neglecting her, though,” said William; “and did she not suppose that that is caused by illness, I fear she would not bear it even as she does.”

“I agree with *you*, William,” observed Agnes; “but after all, it is better to have patience until Mr. Osborne hears from him. His reply will surely be decisive as to his intentions. All may end better than we think.”

Until this reply should arrive, however, they were compelled to remain in that state of suspense which is frequently more painful than the certainty of evil itself. Jane’s mind and health were tended with all the care and affection which her disinclination to society would permit them to show. They forced themselves to be cheerful in order that she might unconsciously partake of a spirit less gloomy than that which every day darkened more deeply about her path. Any attempt to give her direct consolation, however, was found to produce the very consequences which they wished so anxiously to prevent. If for this purpose they entered into conversation with her, no matter in what tone of affectionate sweetness they addressed her, such was the irresistible pathos of her language, that their

hearts became melted, and, instead of being able to comfort the beloved mourner, they absolutely required sympathy themselves. Since their last dialogue, too, it was evident from her manner that some fresh source of pain had been on that occasion opened in her heart. For nearly a week afterwards her eye was fixed from time to time upon her brother William, with a long gaze of hesitation and enquiry—not unmingled with a character of suspicion that appeared still further to sink her spirits by a superadded weight of misery.

Nearly a fortnight had now elapsed since Charles Osborne ought to have received his father's letter, and yet no communication had reached either of the families. Indeed the gradual falling off of his correspondence with Jane, and the commonplace character of his few last letters left little room to hope that his affection for her stood the severe test of time and absence. One morning about this period she brought William into the garden, and after a turn or two, laid her hand gently upon his arm, saying,

"William, I have a secret to entrust you with."

"A secret, Jane—well, I will keep it honorably—what is it, dear?"

"I am very unhappy."

"Surely that's no secret to me, my poor girl."

She shook her head.

"No, no; that's not it; but this is—I strongly suspect that you all know more about Charles than I do."

She fixed her eyes with an earnest penetration on him as she spoke.

"He is expected home soon, Jane."

"He is *not* ill, William; and you have all permitted me to deceive myself into a belief that he is; because you felt that I would rather ten thousand times that he were dead than false—than false."

"He could not, he dare not be false to you, my dear, after having been solemnly betrothed to you, I may say with the consent of your father and his."

"*Dare not*—ha—there is meaning in that, William; your complexion is heightened, too; and so I have found out your secret, my brother. Sunk as is my heart, you ~~see~~ I have greater penetration than you dream of. So he is not sick, but false; and his love for me is gone like a dream. Well, well; but yet I have laid down my own plan of resignation. You would not guess what it is? Come, guess; I will hear nothing further till you guess."

He thought it was better to humor her, and replied in accordance with the hope of his father.

"Religion, my dear Jane, and reliance on God."

"That was my first plan; that was my plan in case the malady I suspected had taken him from me—but what is my plan for his falsehood?"

"I cannot guess, dear Jane."

"Death, William. What consoler like death? what peace so calm as that of the grave? Let the storm of life howl ever so loudly, go but six inches beneath the clay of the church-yard and how still is all there! "

"Indeed, Jane, you distress yourself without cause; never trust me again if Charles will not soon come home, and you and he be happy. Why, my dear Jane, I thought you had more fortitude than to sink under a calamity that has not yet reached you. Surely it will be time enough when you find that Charles *is* false to take it so much to heart as you do."

"That is a good and excellent advice, my dear William; but listen, and I will give a far better one: never deceive your father; never prevaricate with papa, and then you may rest satisfied that your heart will not be crushed by such a calamity as that which has fallen upon me. I deceived papa; and I am now the poor hopeless *castaway* that you see me. Remember that advice, William—keep it, and God will bless you."

William would have remonstrated with her at greater length, but he saw that she was resolved to have no further conversation on the subject. When it was closed she walked slowly and composedly out of the garden, and immediately took her way to those favorite places among which she was latterly in the habit of wandering. One of her expressions, however, sunk upon his affectionate heart too deeply to permit him to rest under the fearful apprehension which it generated. After musing for a little he followed her with a pale face and a tearful eye, resolved to draw from her, with as much tenderness as possible, the exact meaning which, in her allusion to Osborne's falsehood, she had applied to *death*.

He found her sitting upon the bank of the river which we have already described, and exactly opposite to the precise spot in the stream from which Osborne had rescued Ariel. The bird sat on her shoulder, and he saw by her gesture that she was engaged in an earnest address to it. He came on gently behind her, actuated by that kind curiosity which knows that in such unguarded moments a key may possibly be obtained to the abrupt and capricious impulse by which persons laboring under impressions so variable may be managed.

"I will beat you, Ariel," said she, "I will beat you—fie upon you. You an angel of light—no, no—have I not often pointed you out the spot which would have been fatal to you, were it not for *him*—for HIM! Stupid bird! there it is! do you not see it? No, as I live your eye is turned up sideways towards me, instead of looking at it, as if you asked why, dear mistress, do you scold me so? And indeed I do not know, Ariel. I scarcely know—but oh, my dear creature, if you knew—if you knew—it is well you don't. I am here—so are you—but where is he?"

She was then silent for a considerable time, and sat with her head on her hand. William could perceive that she sighed deeply.

He advanced; and on hearing his foot she started, looked about, and on seeing him, smiled.

"I am amusing myself, William," said she.

"How, my dear Jane—how?"

"Why, by the remembrance of my former misery. You know that the recollection of all past happi-



ness is misery to the miserable—is it not? but of that you are no judge, William—you were never miserable.”

“Nor shall you be so, Jane, longer than until Charles returns; but touching your second plan of resignation, love. I don’t understand how *death* could be resignation.”

“Do you not? then I will tell you. Should Charles prove false to me—*that* that would break my heart. I should *die*, and then—then—do you not see—comes Death, the consoler.”

“I see, dear sister; but there will be no necessity for that. Charles will be, and is, faithful and true to you. Will you come home with me, dear Jane?”

“At present I cannot, William; I have places to see and things to think of that are pleasant to me. I may almost say so; because as I told you they *amuse* me. Let misery have its mirth, William; the remembrance of past happiness is mine.”

“Jane, if you love me come home with me now?”

“*If* I do. Ah, William, that’s ungenerous. You are well aware that I do, and so you use an argument which you know I won’t resist. Come,” addressing the dove “we must go; we are put upon our generosity; for of course we *do* love poor William. Yes, we will go, William; it is better, I believe.”

She then took his arm, and both walked home without speaking another word; Jane having relapsed into a pettish silence which her brother felt

it impossible to break without creating unnecessary excitement in a mind already too much disturbed.

From this day forward Jane's mind, fragile as it naturally was, appeared to bend at once under the double burden of Osborne's approaching death, and his apprehended treachery; for wherever the heart is found to choose between two contingent evils, it is also by the very constitution of our nature compelled to bear the penalty of both until its gloomy choice is made. At present Jane was not certain whether Osborne's absence and neglect were occasioned by ill health or faithlessness; and until she knew this the double dread fell, as we said, with proportionate misery upon her spirit.

Bitterly, indeed, did William regret the words in which he desired her "to suppose that Charles Osborne was not sick." Mr. Sinclair himself saw the error, but unhappily too late to prevent the suspicion from entering into an imagination already overwrought and disordered.

Hitherto, however, it was difficult, if not impossible, out of her own family, to notice in her manner or conversation the workings of a mind partially unsettled by a passion which her constitutional melancholy darkened by its own gloomy creations. To strangers she talked rationally, and with her usual grace and perspicuity, but every one observed that her cheerfulness was gone, and the current report went, by whatever means it got abroad, that Jane Sinclair's heart was broken—that Charles Osborne proved faithless—and that the

beautiful Fawn of Springvale was subject to occasional derangement.

In the mean time Osborne was silent both to his father and to her, and as time advanced, the mood of her mind became too seriously unhappy and alarming to justify any further patience on the part either of his family or Mr. Sinclair's. It was consequently settled that Mr. Osborne should set out for Bath, and compel his son's return, under the hope that a timely interview might restore the deserted girl to a better state of mind, and reproduce in his heart which that affection appeared to have either slumbered or died. With a brow of care the excellent man departed, for in addition to the concern which he felt for the calamity of Jane Sinclair and Charles's honor, he also experienced all the anxiety natural to an affectionate father, ignorant of the situation in which he might find an only son, who up to that period had been, and justly too, inexpressibly dear to him.

His absence, however, was soon discovered by Jane, who now began to give many proofs of that address with which unsettled persons can manage to gain a point or extract a secret, when either in their own opinion is considered essential to their gratification. Every member of her own family now became subjected to her vigilance; every word they spoke was heard with suspicion, and received as if it possessed a double meaning. On more than one occasion she was caught in the attitude of a listener and frequently placed herself in such a position when sitting with her relations at home, as

enabled her to watch their motions in the glass, when they supposed her engaged in some melancholy abstraction.

Yet bitter, bitter as all this must have been to their hearts, it was singular to mark, that as the light of her reason receded, a new and solemn feeling of reverence was added to all of love, and sorrow, and pity, that they had hitherto experienced towards her. Now, too, was her sway over them more commanding, though exercised only in the woeful meekness of a broken heart; for, indeed, there is in the darkness of unmerited affliction, a spirit which elevates its object, and makes unsuffering nature humble in its presence. Who is there that has a heart, and few, alas, have, that does not feel himself constrained to bend his head with reverence before those who move in the majesty of undeserved sorrow?

Mr. Osborne had not been many days gone, when Jane, one morning after breakfast, desired the family not to separate for about an hour, or if they did, to certainly reassemble within that period. "And in the meantime," she said, addressing Agnes, "I want you, my dear Agnes, to assist me at my *toilette*, as they say. I am about to dress in my very best, and it cannot, you know, be from vanity, for I have no one now to gratify but yourselves—come."

Mr. Sinclair beckoned with his hand to Agnes to attend her, and they accordingly left the room together.

"What is the reason, Agnes," she said, "that

there is so much mystery in this family? I do not like these nods, and beckonings, and gestures, all so full of meaning. It grieves me to see my papa, who is the very soul of truth and candor, have recourse to them. But, alas, why should I blame any of you, when I know that it is from an excess of indulgence to poor Jane, and to avoid giving her pain that you do it?"

"Well, we will not do it any more, love, if it pains or is disagreeable to you."

"It confounds me, Agnes, it injures my head, and sometimes makes me scarcely know where I am, or who are about me. I begin to think that there's some dreadful secret among you; and I think of coffins, and deaths, or of marriages, and wedding favors, and all that. Now, I can't bear to think of marriages, but death has something consoling in it; give me death the consoler: yet," she added, musing, "we shall not die, but we shall all be changed."

"Jane, love, may I ask you *why* you are dressing with such care?"

"When we go down stairs I shall tell you. It's wonderful, wonderful!"

"What is, dear?"

"My fortitude. But those words were prophetic. I remember well what I felt when I heard them; to be sure he placed them in a different light from what I at first understood them in; but I am handsomer now, I think. You will be a witness for me below, Agnes, will you not?"

"To be sure, darling."

"Agnes, where are my tears gone of late? I think I ought to advertise for them, or advertise for others, 'Wanted for unhappy Jane Sinclair'!"—

Agnes could bear no more. "Jane," she exclaimed, clasping her in her arms, and kissing her smiling lips, for she smiled while uttering the last words, "oh, Jane, don't, don't, my darling, or you will break my heart—your own Agnes's heart, whom you loved so well, and whose happiness or misery is bound up in your's."

"For unhappy Jane Sinclair!—no I won't distress you, dear Agnes; let the advertisement go; here, I will kiss you, love, and dry your tears, and then when I am dressed you shall know all."

She took up her own handkerchief as she spoke, and after having again kissed her sister, wiped her cheeks and dried her eyes with childlike tenderness and affection. She then looked sorrowfully upon Agnes, and said—"Oh, Agnes, Agnes, but my heart is heavy—heavy!"

Agnes's tears were again beginning to flow, but Jane once more kissed her, and hastily wiping her eyes, exclaimed in that sweet, low voice with which we address children, "Hush, hush, Agnes, do not cry, I will not make you sorry any more."

She then went on to dress herself, but uttered not another word until she and Agnes met the family below stairs.

"I am now come, papa and mamma, and William, and my darling Maria—but, Maria, listen,—I wont have a tear, and you, Agnes,—I am come now to tell you a secret."

"And, dearest life," said her mother, "what is it?"

"What made them call me the Fawn of Springvale?"

"For your gentleness, love," said Mr. Sinclair.

"And for your beauty, darling," added her mother.

"Papa has it," she replied quickly; "for my gentleness, for my gentleness, My beauty, mamma, I am *not* beautiful."

While uttering these words, she approached the looking-glass, and surveyed herself with a smile of irony that seemed to disclaim her own assertion. But it was easy to perceive that the irony was directed to some one not then present, and that it was also associated with the memory of something painful to her in an extreme degree.

Not beautiful! Never did mortal form gifted with beauty approaching nearer to our conception of the divine or angelic, stand smiling in the consciousness of its own charms before a mirror.

"Now," she proceeded, "I am going to make everything quite plain. I never told you this before, but it is time I should now. Listen—Charles Osborne bound himself by a curse, that if he met, during his absence, a girl more beautiful than I am—or than I was then, I should say,—he would cease to write to me—he would cease to love me. Now, here's my secret,—he *has* found a girl more beautiful than I am,—that I was then, I mean,—for he *has* ceased to write to me—and of course he has ceased to love me. So mamma, I am *not* beautiful,

and the Fawn of Springvale—his own Jane Sinclair is forgotten.”

She sat down and hung her head for some minutes, and the family, thinking that she either wept or was about to weep, did not think it right to address her. She rose up, however, and said:

“Agnes is my witness: Did not you, Agnes, say that I *am now* much handsomer than when Charles saw me last?”

“I did, darling, and I do.”

“Very well, mamma—perhaps you will find me beautiful yet. Now the case is this, and I will be guided by my papa. Let me see—Charles may have seen a girl more beautiful than I was *then*,—but how does he know whether she is more beautiful than I *am now*?”

It was—it was woful to see a creature of such unparalleled grace and loveliness working out the calculations of insanity, in order to sustain a broken heart.

“But then,” she added, still smiling in conscious beauty, “why does he not come to see me now? Why does he not come?”

After musing again for some time, she dropped on her knees in one of those rapid transitions of feeling peculiar to persons of her unhappy class; and joining her hands, looked up to Agnes with a countenance utterly and indescribably mournful, exclaiming as she did it, in the same words as before:—

“Oh Agnes, Agnes, but my heart is heavy!”

She then laid down her head on her sister’s knees,



and for a long time mused and murmured to herself, as if her mind was busily engaged on some topic full of grief and misery. This was evident by the depth of her sighs, which shook her whole frame, and heaved with convulsive quiverings through her bosom. Having remained in this posture about ten minutes, she arose, and without speaking, or noticing any of the family, went out and sauntered with slow and melancholy steps about the places where she loved to walk.

Mr. Sinclair's family at this period, and indeed, for a considerable time past were placed, with reference to their unhappy daughter in circumstances of peculiar distress. Their utter ignorance of Osborne's designs put it out of their power to adopt any particular mode of treatment in Jane's case. They could neither give her hope, nor prepare her mind for disappointment; but were forced to look passively on, though with hearts wrung into agony, whilst her miserable malady every day gained new strength in its progress of desolation. The crisis was near at hand, however, that was to terminate their suspense. A letter from Mr. Osborne arrived, in which he informed them that Charles had left Bath, for London, in company with a family of rank, a few days before he reached it. He mentioned the name of the baronet, whose beautiful daughter, possessing an ample fortune, at her own disposal, fame reported to have been smitten with his son's singular beauty and accomplishments. It was also said, he added, that the lady had prevailed on her father to sanction

young Osborne's addresses to her, and that the baronet, who was a strong political partizan, calculating upon his pre-eminent talents, intended to bring him into parliament, in order to strengthen his party. He added that he himself was then starting for London, to pursue his son, and rescue him from an act which would stamp his name with utter baseness and dishonor.

This communication, so terrible in its import to a family of such worth and virtue, was read to them by Mr. Sinclair, during one of those solitary rambles which Jane was in the habit of taking every day.

"Now, my children," said the white-haired father, summoning all the fortitude of a Christian man to his aid,—“now must we show ourselves not ignorant of those resources which the religion of Christ opens to all who are for His wise purposes grievously and heavily afflicted. Let us act as becomes the dignity of our faith. We must suffer: let it be with patience, and a will resigned to that which laid the calamity upon us,—and principally upon the beloved mourner who is dear, dear—and oh! how justly is she dear to all our hearts! Be firm, my children—and neither speak, nor look, nor act as if these heavy tidings had reached us. This is not only our duty, but our wisest course under circumstances so distressing as ours. Another letter from Mr. Osborne will decide all, and until then we must suffer in silent reliance upon the mercy of God. It may, however, be a consolation to you all to know, that if this young man's heart

be detached from that of our innocent and loving child, I would rather—the disposing will of God being still allowed—see her wrapped in the ceremonies of death than united to one, who with so little scruple can trample upon the sanctions of religion, or tamper with the happiness of a fellow-creature. Oh, may God of His mercy sustain our child, and bear her in His own right hand through this heavy woe!”

This affecting admonition did not fall upon them in vain,—for until the receipt of Mr. Osborne’s letter from London, not even Jane, with all her vigilance, was able to detect in their looks or manner any change or expression beyond what she had usually noticed. That letter at length arrived, and, as they had expected, filled up the measure of Osborne’s dishonor and their affliction. The contents were brief but fearful. Mr. Osborne stated that he arrived in London on the second day after his son’s marriage, and found, to his unutterable distress, that he and his fashionable wife had departed for the continent on the very day the ceremony took place.

“I could not,” proceeded his father, “wrench my heart so suddenly out of the strong affection it felt for the hope of my past life, as to curse him; but, from this day forward I disown him as my son. You know not, my friend, what I feel, and what I suffer; for he who was the pride of my declining years has, by this act of unprincipled ambition, set his seal to the unhappiness of his father. I am told, indeed, that the lady is very beautiful—and ami

able as she is beautiful—and that their passion for each other amounts to idolatry;—but neither her beauty, nor her wealth, nor her goodness could justify my son in an act of such cruel and abandoned perfidy to a creature who seems to be more nearly related to the angelic nature than the human.”

“You see, my children,” observed Mr. Sinclair, “that the worst, as far as relates to Osborne, is before us. I have nothing now to add to what I have already said on the receipt of the letter from Bath. You know your duty, and with God’s assistance I trust you will act up to it. At present it might be fatal to our child were she to know what has happened; nor, indeed, are *we* qualified to break the matter to her, without the advice of some medical man, eminent in cases similar to that which afflicts her.”

These observations were scarcely concluded when Jane entered the room, and as usual, cast a calm but searching glance around her. She saw that they had been in tears, and that they tried in vain to force their faces into a hurried composure, that seemed strangely at variance with what they felt.

After a slight pause she sat down, and putting her hand to her temple, mused for some minutes. They observed that a sorrow more deep and settled than usual, was expressed on her countenance. Her eyes were filled, although tears did not come, and the muscles of her lips quivered excessively; yet she did not speak; and such was the solemnity of the moment to them, who knew all, that none

of them could find voice sufficiently firm to address her.

"Papa," said she, at length, "this has been a day of busy thought with me. I think I see, and I am sure I feel my own situation. The only danger is, that I may feel it too much. I fear I have felt it—(she put her hand to her forehead as she spoke)—I fear I *have* felt it too deeply already. Pauses—lapses, or perhaps want of memory for a certain space, occasioned by—by——" she hesitated. "Bear with me, papa, and mamma; bear with me; for this is a great effort; let me recollect myself, and do not question me or speak to me until I——. It is, it is woeful to see me reduced to this; but nothing is seriously wrong with me yet—nothing. Let me see; yes, yes, papa, here it is. Let us not be reduced to the miserable necessity of watching each other, as we have been. Let me know the worst. You have nearly broken me down by suspense. Let me know the purport of the letter you received to-day."

"To-day, love!" exclaimed her mother.

"Yes, mamma, to-day. I made John show it me on his way from the post-office. The superscription was Mr. Osborne's hand. Let me, O let me," she exclaimed, dropping down upon her knees, "as you value my happiness here and hereafter, let me at once know the worst—the very worst. Am I not the daughter of a pious minister of the Gospel, and do you think I shall or can forget the instructions I received from his lips? Treat me as a rational being, if you wish me to remain rational

But O, as you love my happiness here, and my soul's salvation, do not, papa, do not, manna, do not, Maria, do not, Agnes, William,—do not one or all of you keep your unhappy sister hanging in the agony of suspense! It will kill me!—it will kill me!”

Suppressed sobs there were, which no firmness could restrain. But in a few moments those precepts of the Christian pastor, which we have before mentioned, came forth among this sorrowing family, in the same elevated spirit which dictated them. When Jane had concluded this appeal to her father, there was a dead silence in the room, and every eye glanced from him to her, full of uncertainty as to what course of conduct he would pursue. He turned his eyes upwards for a few moments, and said:

“Can truth, my children, under any circumstances, be injurious to——”

“Oh no, no, papa,” exclaimed Jane; “I know—I feel the penalty paid for even the indirect violation of it.”

“In the name of God, then,” exclaimed the well-meaning man, “we will rely upon the good sense and religious principle of our dear Jane, and tell her the whole truth.”

“Henry, dear!” said Mrs. Sinclair in a tone of expostulation.

“Oh papa,” said Agnes, “remember your own words!”

“The truth, my papa, the truth!” said Jane. “You are its accredited messenger.”

"Jane," said he, "is your trust strong in the support of the Almighty?"

"I have no other dependence, papa."

"Then," said he, "this is the truth: Charles Osborne has been false to you. He has broken his vows;—he is married to another woman. And now, my child, may the God of truth, and peace, and mercy, sustain and console you!"

"And He will, too, my papa!—He will!" she exclaimed, rising up;—"He will! He will!—I—I know—I think I know something. I violated truth, and now truth is my punishment. I violated it to my papa, and now my papa is the medium of *that* punishment. Well, then, there's a Providence proved. But, in the mean time, mamma, what has become of my beauty? It is gone—it is gone—and now for humility and repentance—now for sack-cloth and ashes. I am now no longer beautiful!—so off, off go the trappings of vanity!"

She put her hands up to her bosom, and began to tear down her dress with a violence so powerful, that it took William and Maria's strength to prevent her. She became furious. "Let me go," she exclaimed, "let me go; I am bound to a curse; but Charles, Charles—don't you see he will be poisoned; he will kiss her lips and be poisoned; poisoned lips for Charles, and I too see it!—and mine here with balm upon them, and peace and love! My boy's lost, and I am lost, and the world has destroyed us."

She wrought with incredible strength, and attempted still, while speaking, to tear her garments off; but finding herself overpowered, she at length

sat down and passed from this state of violence into a mood so helplessly calm, that the family, now in an outcry of grief, with the exception of her father who *appeared* cool, felt their very hearts shiver at the vacant serenity of her countenance.

Her mother went over, and, seizing her husband firmly by the arms, pulled him towards her, and with an ashy face and parched lips, exclaimed, 'There, Charles—all is now over—our child is an idiot!'

"Oh do not blame me," said the broken-hearted father; "I did it for the best. Had I thought—had I thought—but I will speak to her, for I think my voice will reach her heart—you know how she loved me."

"Jane," said he, approaching her, "Jane, my dearest life, will you not speak to your papa?"

She became uneasy again, and, much to their relief, broke silence.

"I am not," said she, calmly; "it is gone; I *was* once though—indeed, indeed I was; and it *was* said so; I was called the Fawn of—of—but it *seems* beauty passes like the flower of the field."

"Darling, speak to me, to your papa."

"I believe I am old now; an old woman, I suppose. My hair is grey, and I am wrinkled; that's the reason why they scorn me; well I was once both young and beautiful; but that is past. Charles," said she, catching her father's hand and looking into it, "*you* are old, too, I believe. Why—why—why, how is this? Your hair is long and white. Oh, what a change since I knew you last.



White hair! long, white, venerable, hair—that's old age—

"Pity old age within whose silver hairs  
Honor and reverence evermore do lie."

"Thank God, dear Henry," said her mother, "she is not at all events an idiot. Children," said she, "I trust you will remember your father's advice, and bear this—this——." But here the heart and strength of the mother herself were overcome, and she was sinking down when her son caught her ere she fell, and carried her out in his arms, accompanied by Maria and Agnes.

It would be difficult for any pen to paint the distraction of her father, thus placed in a state of divided apprehension between his daughter and his wife.

"Oh, my child, my child," he exclaimed, "perhaps in the midst of this misery, your mother may be dying! May the God of all consolation support you and her! What, oh, what will become of us!"

"Well, well," his daughter went on; "life's a fearful thing that can work such changes; but why may we not as well pass at once from youth to old age as from happiness to misery? Here we are both old; ay, and if we are grey it is less with age than affliction—that's one comfort—I am young enough to be beautiful yet; but age, when it comes prematurely on the youthful, as it often does—thanks to treachery and disappointment, ay, and thanks to a thousand causes which we all know but don't wish to think of; age, I say, when it

comes prematurely on the youthful, is just like a new and unfinished house that is suffered to fall into ruin—desolation, naked, and fresh, and glaring—without the reverence and grandeur of antiquity. Yes—yes—yes; but there is another cause; and that must be whispered only to the uttermost depths of silence—of silence; for silence is the voice of God. *That word—that word!* Oh, how I shudder to think of it! And who will pity me when I acknowledge it—there is one—one only—who will mourn for my despair and the fate, fore-ordained and predestined, of one whom he loved—that is my papa—my papa only—my papa only; for he knows that I am *a cast-a-way*—A CAST-A-WAY!”

These words were uttered with an energy of manner and a fluency of utterance which medical men know to be strongly characteristic of insanity, unless indeed where the malady is silent and moping. The afflicted old man now discovered that his daughter's mind had, in addition to her disappointment, sunk under the frightful and merciless dogma which we trust will soon cease to darken and distort the beneficent character of God. Indeed it might have been evident to him before that in looking upon herself as a cast-a-way, Jane's sensitive spirit was gradually lapsing into the gloomy horrors of predestination. But this blindness of the father to such a tendency was very natural in a man to whose eye familiarity with the doctrine had removed its deformity. The old man looked upon her countenance with an expression of mute affliction almost verging on despair; for a moment he forgot the

situation of his wife and everything but the consequences of a discovery so full of terror and dismay.

"Alas, my unhappy child," he exclaimed, "and is this, too, to be added to your misery and ours? Now, indeed, is the cup of our affliction full even to overflowing. O God! who art good and full of mercy," he added, dropping on his knees under the bitter impulse of the moment, "and who willest not the death of a sinner, oh lay not upon her or us a weight of sorrow greater than we can bear. We do not, O Lord! for we dare not, desire Thee to stay Thy hand; but oh, chastise us in mercy, especially her—her—our hearts' dearest—she was ever the child of our loves; but now she is also the unhappy child of all our sorrows; the broken idol of affections which we cannot change. Enable us, O God, to acquiesce under this mysterious manifestation of Thy will, and to receive from Thy hand with patience and resignation whatsoever of affliction it pleaseth Thee to lay upon us. And touching this stricken one—if it were Thy blessed will to—to—but no—oh no—not *our* will, oh Lord, but *Thine* be done!"

It was indeed a beautiful thing to see the sorrow-bound father bowing down his grey locks with humility before the footstool of his God, and forbearing even to murmur under a dispensation so fearfully calamitous to him and his. Religion, however, at which the fool and knave may sneer in the moments of convivial riot, is after all the only stay on which the human heart can rest in those severe trials of life which almost every one sooner or later is des-

tioned to undergo. The sceptic may indeed triumph in the pride of his intellect or in the hour of his passion; but no matter on what arguments his hollow creed is based, let but the footstep of disease or death approach, and he himself is the first to abandon it and take refuge in those truths which he had hitherto laughed at or maligned.

When Mr. Sinclair arose, his countenance, through all the traces of sorrow which were upon it, beamed with a light which no principle, merely human, could communicate to it. A dim but gentle and holy radiance suffused his whole face, and his heart, for a moment, received the assurance it wanted so much. He experienced a feeling for which language has no terms, or at least none adequate to express its character. It was "that peace of God which passeth all understanding."

In a few minutes after he had concluded his short but earnest prayer, Agnes returned to let him know that her mamma was better and would presently come in to sit with Jane, whom she could not permit, she said, to remain out of her sight. Jane had been silent for some time, but the extreme brilliancy of her eyes and the energy of her excitement were too obvious to permit any expectation of immediate improvement.

When her mother and Maria returned, accompanied also by William, she took no notice whatsoever of them, nor indeed did she appear to have an eye for anything external to her own deep but unsettled misery. Time after time they spoke to her as before, each earnestly hoping that some favorite ex-

pressior. or familiar tone of voice might impinge, however slightly, upon her reason, or touch some chord of her affections. These tender devices of their love, however, all failed; no corresponding emotion was awakened, and they resolved, without loss of time, to see what course of treatment medical advice would recommend them to pursue on her behalf. Accordingly William proceeded with a heavy heart to call in the aid of a gentleman who can bear full testimony to the accuracy of our narrative—we allude to that able and eminent practitioner, Doctor M'Cormick of Belfast, whose powers of philosophical analysis and patient investigation are surpassed only by the success of the masterly skill with which he applies them. The moment he left the room for this purpose, Jane spoke.

"It will be hard," she said, "and I need not conceal it, for my very thought has a voice at the footstool of the Almighty; the intelligences of other worlds know it; all the invisible spirits of the universe know it; those that are evil rejoice, and the good would murmur if the fulness of their own happiness permitted them. No—no—I need not conceal it—hearken, therefore—hearken;" and she lowered her voice to a whisper—"the Fawn of Springvale—Jane Sinclair—is predestined to eternal misery. She is a cast-a-way. I may therefore speak and raise my voice to warn; who shall dare," she added, "who shall dare ever to depart from the truth! Those—those only who have been foredoomed—like me. Oh misery, misery, is there no hope? nothing but despair for one so young, and as

they said so gentle, and so beautiful. Alas! alas! Death to me now is *no* consoler!"

She clasped her beautiful hands together as she spoke, and looked with a countenance so full of unutterable woe that no heart could avoid participating in her misery.

"Jane, oh darling of all our hearts," said her weeping mother, "will you not come over and sit beside your mamma—your mamma, my treasure, who feels that she cannot long live to witness what you suffer."

"The Fawn of Springvale," she proceeded, "the gentle Fawn of Springvale, for it was on the account of my gentleness I was so called, is stricken—the arrow is here—in her poor broken heart; and what did she do? what did the gentle creature do to suffer or to deserve all this misery?"

"True, my sister—too true, too true," said Maria, bursting into an agony of bitter sorrow; "what strange mystery is in the gentle one's affliction? Surely, if there was ever a spotless or a sinless creature on earth, she was and is that creature."

"Beware of murmuring, Maria," said her father; "the purpose, though at present concealed, may yet become sufficiently apparent for us to recognize in it the benignant dispensation of a merciful God. Our duty, my dear child, is now to bear, and be resigned. The issues of this sad calamity are with the Almighty, and with Him let us patiently leave them."

"Had I never disclosed my love," proceeded Jane, "I might have stolen quietly away from them all

and laid my cheek on that hardest pillow which giveth the soundest sleep; but would not concealment," she added, starting; "would not *that too* have been dissimulation? Oh God help me!—it is, it is clear that in any event I was foredoomed!"

Agnes, who had watched her sister with an interest too profound to suffer even the grief necessary on such an occasion to take place, now went over, and taking her hand in one of her's, placed the fingers of the other upon her sister's cheek, thus attempting to fix Jane's eyes upon her own countenance—

"Do you not know who it is," said she, "that is now speaking to you?—Look upon *me*, and tell me do you forget me so soon?"

"Who can tell yet," she proceeded, "who can tell yet—time may retrieve all, and he may return: but the yew tree—I fear—I fear—why, it is an emblem of death; and perhaps death may unite us—yes, and I say he will—he will—he will. Does he not feel pity? Oh yes, in a thousand, thousand cases he is the friend of the miserable. Death the Consoler! Oh from how many an aching brow does he take away the pain for ever? How many sorrows does he soothe into rest that is never broken!—from how many hearts like mine, does he pluck the arrows that fester in them, and bids them feel pain no more! In his house, that house appointed for all living—what calmness and peace is there? How sweet and tranquil is the bed which he smoothes down for the unhappy; there the wicked cease from

troubling, and the weary are at rest. Then give me Death the Consoler?—Death the Consoler!”

A sense of relief and wild exultation beamed from her countenance, on uttering the last words, and she rose up and walked about the room wringing her hands, yet smiling at the idea of being relieved by Death the Consoler! It is not indeed unusual to witness in deranged persons, an unconscious impression of pain and misery, accompanied at the same time by a vague sense of unreal happiness—that is, a happiness which, whilst it balances the latent conviction of their misery, does not, however, ultimately remove it. This probably constitutes that pleasure in madness, which, it is said, none but mad persons know.

At length she stood, and, for a long time seemed musing upon various and apparently contrasted topics, for she sometimes smiled like a girl at play, and sometimes relapsed into darkness of mood and pain, and incoherency. But after passing through these rapid changes for many minutes, she suddenly exclaimed in a low but earnest voice, “where is *he*?”

“Where is who, love?” said her mother.

“Where is *he*?—why does he not come?—something more than usual must prevent him, or he would not stay away so long from ‘his own Jane Sinclair.’ But I forgot; bless me, how feeble my memory is growing! Why this is the hour of our appointment, and I will be late unless I hurry—for who could give so gentle and affectionate a being as Charles pain?”



She immediately put on her bonnet, and was about to go abroad, when her father, gently laying his hand upon her arm, said, in a kind but admonitory voice, in which was blended a slightly perceptible degree of parental authority—

“My daughter, surely you will not go out—you are unwell.”

She started slightly, paused, and looked as if trying to remember something that she had forgotten. The struggle, however, was vain—her recollection proved too weak for the task it had undertaken. After a moment's effort, she smiled sweetly in her father's face, and said—

“You would not have me break my appointment, nor give poor Charles pain, and his health, moreover, so delicate. You know he would die rather than give me a moment's anxiety. Die!—see that again—I know not what puts death into my head so often.”

“Henry,” said her mother, “it is probably better to let her have her own way for the present—at least until Dr. M'Cormick arrives. You and Agnes can accompany her, perhaps she may be the better for it.”

“I cannot refuse her,” said the old man; “at all events, I agree with you; there can, I think, be no possible harm in allowing her to go. Come, Agnes, we must, alas! take care of her.”

She then went out, they walking a few paces behind her, and proceeded down the valley which we have already described in the opening of this story, until she came to the spot at the river, where she first

met Osborne. Here she involuntarily stood a moment, and putting her hand to her right shoulder, seemed to miss some object, that was obviously restored to her recollection by an association connected with the place. She shook her head, and sighed several times, and then exclaimed—

“Ungrateful bird, does it neglect me too?”

Her father pressed Agnes’s arm with a sensation of joy, but spoke not lest his voice might disturb her, or break the apparent continuity of her reviving memory. She seemed to think, however, that she delayed here too long, for without taking further notice of any thing she hurried on to the spot where the first disclosure of their loves had taken place. On reaching it she looked anxiously and earnestly around the copse or dell in which the yew tree, with its turf seat stood.

“How is this?—how is this?”—she murmured to herself, “he is not here!”

Both her father and Agnes observed that during the whole course of the unhappy but faithful girl’s love, they never had witnessed such a concentrated expression of utter woe and sorrow as now impressed themselves upon her features.

“He has not come,” said she; “but I can wait—I can wait—it will teach my heart to be patient.”

She then clasped her hands, and sitting down under the shade of the yew tree, mused and murmured to herself alternately, but in such an evident spirit of desolation and despair, as made her father fear that her heart would literally break down under the heavy burthen of her misery. When she

had sat here nearly an hour, he approached her and gently taking her hand, which felt as cold as marble, said—

“Will you not come home, darling? Your mamma is anxious you should return to her. Come,” and he attempted gently to draw her with him.

“I can wait, I can wait,” she replied, “if he should come and find me gone, he would break his heart—I can wait.”

“Oh do not droop my sweet sister; do not droop so much; all will yet be well,” said Agnes, weeping.

“I care for none but him—to me there is only one being in life—all else is a blank; but he will not come, and is it not too much to try the patience of a heart so fond and faithful.”

“It is not likely he will come to-day,” replied Agnes; “something has prevented him; but to-morrow—”

“I will seek him elsewhere,” said Jane, rising suddenly; “but is it not singular, and indeed to what strange passes things may come? A young lady seeking her lover!—not over-modest certainly—nay, positively indelicate—fie upon me! Why should I thus expose myself? It is unworthy of my father’s daughter, and Jane Sinclair will not do it.”

She then walked a few paces homewards, but again stopped and earnestly looked in every direction, as if expecting to see the object of her love. Long indeed did she linger about a spot so dear to

her; and often did she sit down again and rise to go—sometimes wringing her hands in the muteness of sorrow, and sometimes exhibiting a sense of her neglect in terms of pettish and indirect censure against Osborne for his delay. It was in one of those capricious moments that she bent her steps homewards; and as she had again to pass that part of the river where the accident occurred to the dove, Agnes and her father observed that she instinctively put her hand to her shoulder, and appeared as if disappointed. On this occasion, however, she made no observation whatever, but, much to their satisfaction, mechanically proceeded towards Springvale House, which she reached without uttering another word.

Until a short time before the arrival of Dr. M'Cormick, this silence remained unbroken. She sat nearly in the same attitude, evidently pondering on something that excited great pain, as was observable by her frequent startings, and a disposition to look wildly about her, as if with an intention of suddenly speaking. These, however, passed quickly away, and she generally relapsed into her wild and unsettled *reveries*.

When the doctor arrived, he sat with her in silence for a considerable time—listening to her incoherencies from an anxiety to ascertain, as far as possible, by what she might utter, whether her insanity was likely to be transient or otherwise. The cause of it he had already heard from report generally, and a more exact and circumstantial account on that day from her brother William.

"It is difficult," he at length said, "to form anything like an exact opinion upon the first attack of insanity, arising from a disappointment of the heart. Much depends upon the firmness of the general character, and the natural force of their common sense. If I were to judge, not only by what I have heard from this most beautiful and interesting creature, as well as from the history of her heart, which her brother gave me so fully, I would say that I think this attack will not be a long one. I am of opinion that her mind is in a state of transition not from reason but to it; and that this transition will not be complete without much physical suffering. The state of her pulse assures me of this, as does the coldness of her hands. I should not be surprised if, in the course of this very night she were attacked with strong fits. These, if they take place, will either restore her to reason or confirm her insanity. Poor girl," said the amiable man, looking on her whilst his eyes filled with tears, "he must have been a heartless wretch to abandon such a creature. My dear Jane," he added, addressing her, for he had been, and still is, familiar with the family; "I am sorry to find that you are so unwell, but you will soon be better. Do you not know me."

"It was sworn," said the unhappy mourner; "it was sworn, and I felt this here—here"—and she placed her hand upon her heart; "I felt this little tenant of my poor bosom sink—sink, and my blood going from my cheeks when the words were uttered. More beautiful! more beautiful! why, and

what is love if it is borne away merely by beauty? I loved him not for his beauty alone—I loved him because he—he—because he loved me—but at first I *did* love him for his beauty; well, he *has* found another more beautiful; and his *own* Jane Sinclair, *his* Fawn of Springvale, as he used to call me, is forgotten. But mark me—let none dare to blame *him*—he only fulfilled his destined part—the thing was foredoomed, and I knew that by my suppression of the truth to my papa, the seal of reprobation was set to my soul. Then—then it was that I felt myself a cast-away! And indeed,” she added, rising up and laying the forefinger of her right hand on the palm of her left, “I would at any time sacrifice myself for his happiness; I would; yet alas,” she added, sitting down and hanging her head in sorrow; “why—why is it that *I* am so miserable, when *he* is happy? Why is that, Miss Jane Sinclair—why is that?” She then sighed deeply, and added in a tone of pathos almost irresistible—“Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest.”

She had scarcely spoken, when, by a beautiful and affecting coincidence, Ariel entered the room, and immediately flew into her bosom. She put her hand up and patted it for some time rather unconsciously than otherwise.

“Ah, you foolish bird,” she at length said. “have you no better place of refuge; no calmer spot to repose upon, than a troubled and a broken heart?”

This incident of the dove, together with the

mournful truth of this melancholy observation, filled every eye with tears, except those of her father, who now exhibited a spirit of calm obedience to what he considered an affliction that called upon him to act as one whose faith was not the theory of a historic Christian.

"But how," added Jane, "can I be unhappy with the Paraclete in my bosom? The Paraclete—oh that I were not reprobate and foredoomed—then indeed, he might be there—all, all by one suppression of truth—but surely my papa pities his poor girl for that. There is, I know, one that loves me, and one that pities me. My papa knows that I am foredoomed, and cannot but pity me; but where is *he*, and why does he delay so long. Hush! I will sing—

The dawning of morn, the daylight's sinking,  
The night's long hours still find me thinking  
Of thee, thee—only thee!

She poured a spirit into these words so full of the wild sorrow of insanity, as to produce an effect that was thrilling and fearful upon those who were forced to listen to her. Nay, her voice seemed, in some degree, to awaken her own emotions, or to revive her memory to a confused perception of her situation. And in mercy it would appear that Providence unveiled only half her memory to reason; for from the effect which even that passing glimpse had upon her, is it not wrong to infer that had she seen it in its full extent, she would have immediately sunk under it.

After singing the words of Moore with all the

unregulated pathos of a maniac, she wrung her hands, and was for a considerable time silent. During this interval she sighed deeply, and after a pause of half an hour arose suddenly, and seizing her father by the breast of the coat, brought him over, and placed him on the sofa beside her. She then looked earnestly into his face, and was about to speak, but her thoughts were too weak for the task, and after putting her hand to her forehead, as if to assist her recollection, she let it fall passively beside her, and hung her head in a mood, partaking at once of childish pique and deep dejection.

The doctor, who watched her closely, observed, that in his opinion the consequences of the unhappy intelligence that day communicated to her, had not yet fully developed themselves. "The storm has not yet burst," he added, "but it is quite evident that the elements for it are fast gathering. She will certainly have a glimpse of reason before the paroxysms appear, because, in point of fact, that is what will induce them."

"How soon, doctor," asked her mother, "do you think she will have to encounter this fresh and woeful trial?"

"I should be disposed to think within the lapse of twenty-four hours; certainly within forty-eight."

The amiable doctor's opinion, however, was much more quickly verified than he imagined; for Jane, whose heart yearned towards her father with the beautiful instinct of an affection which scarcely in



sanity itself could overcome, once more looked earnestly into his face, with an eye in which meaning and madness seemed to struggle for the mastery. She gazed at him for a long time, put her hands upon his white hair, into which she gently twined her long white fingers; once or twice she smiled, and said something in a voice too low to be heard: but all at once she gave a convulsive start, clasped her hands wofully, and throwing herself on his bosom, exclaimed:

“Oh papa, papa—your child is lost: pray for me—pray for me.”

Her sobs became too thick and violent for further utterance; she panted and wrought strongly, until until at length she lay with locked teeth and clenched hands struggling in a fit which eventually, by leaving her, terminated in a state of lethargic insensibility.

For upwards of three days she suffered more than any person unacquainted with her delicacy of constitution could deem her capable of enduring. And, indeed, were it not that the aid rendered by Dr. McCormick was so prompt and so skillful, it is possible that the sorrows of the faithful Jane Sinclair might have here closed. On the fourth day, however, she experienced a change; but, alas, such a change as left the loving and beloved group who had hung over her couch with anxious hopes of her restoration to reason, now utterly hopeless and miserable. She arose from her paroxysms a beautiful, happy, and smiling maniac, from whose soul in mercy had been removed that susceptibility &c

mental pain, which constitutes the burthen and bitterness of ordinary calamity.

The first person who discovered this was her mother, who, on the fourth morning of her illness, had stolen to her bedside to see how her beloved one felt. Agnes, who would permit no other person to nurse her darling sister, lay asleep with her head reclining on the foot of the bed, having been overcome by her grief and the fatigue of incessant watching. As her mother stooped down to look into the sufferer's face, her heart bounded with delight on seeing Jane's eyes smiling upon her with all the symptoms of recognition.

"Jane, my heart's dearest," she said, in a soothing, low inquiry, "don't you know me?"

"Yes, very well," she replied; "you are my mamma, and this is Agnes sleeping on the foot of the bed. Why does she sleep there?"

The happy mother scarcely heard her child's question, for ere the words were well uttered she laid her head down upon the mourner's bosom, in a burst of melancholy joy, and wept so loudly that her voice awakened Agnes, who, starting up, exclaimed:

"Oh, mother, mother—what is this? Is—is our darling gone at last! Jane gone?" she said, "No, no—she must not—she would not leave her Agnes, Oh mother—mother, is it so?"

"No, no, Agnes love; no—but may the mercy of God be exalted for ever, Jane knows her mamma this morning, and she knows you too, Agnes."

That ever faithful sister no sooner heard the words, than a smile of indescribable happiness overspread her face, which, however, became instantly pale, and the next moment she sunk down, and in a long swoon forgot both the love and sorrow of her favorite sister. In little more than a minute the family were assembled in the sick-room, and heard from Mrs. Sinclair's lips the history, as she thought, of their beloved one's recovery. Agnes was soon restored, and indeed it would be impossible to witness a scene of such unexpected delight, as that presented by the rejoicing group which surrounded the bed of the happy — alas, *too* happy, Jane Sinclair.

"Is it possible, my dear," said her father, "that our darling is restored to her sense and recollection?"

"Try her, Henry," said the proud mother.

"Jane, my love, do you not know me?" he asked.

"To be sure, papa; to be sure," she replied smiling.

"And you know all of us, my heart's treasure?"

"Help me up a little," she replied; "now I will show you: you are my papa—there is my mamma—that is William—and Maria there will kiss me."

Maria, from whose eyes gushed tears of delight, flew to the sweet girl's bosom.

"But," added Jane, "there is another—*another* that must come to my bosom and *stay* there—Agnes!"

"I am here, my own darling," replied Agnes, stooping and folding her arms about the beautiful creature's snow-white neck, whilst she kissed her lips with a fervor of affection equal to the delight experienced at her supposed recovery.

"There now, Agnes, you are to sleep with me to-night: but I want my papa. Papa, I want you."

Her father stood forward, his mild eyes beaming with an expression of delight and happiness.

"I am here, my sweet child."

"You ought to be a proud man, papa; a proud man: although I say it, that ought *not* to say it, you are father to the most beautiful girl in Europe. Charles Osborne has traveled Europe, and can find none at all so beautiful as the Fawn of Springvale, and so he is coming home one of these days to marry me, because, you know, *because* he could find none else *so* beautiful. If he had—if he had—you know—I, you may be assured, would not be the girl of his choice. Yet I would marry him still, if it were not for one thing; and that is—that I am foredoomed; a reprobate and a cast-a-way; predestined—predestined—and so I would not wish to drag him to hell along with me; I shall therefore act the heroic part, and refuse him. Still it is something—oh it is much—and I am proud of it, not only on my own account, but on his, to be the most beautiful girl in Europe! I am proud of it, because he would not marry if I were not."

Oh unhappy, but affectionate mourners, what—what was all you had yet suffered, when contrasted with the sudden and unexpected misery of this bit-

ter moment. Your hearts had gathered in joy and happiness around the bed of that sweet girl, the gleams of whose insanity you had mistaken for the light of reason; and now has hope disappeared, and the darkness of utter despair fallen upon you all for ever.

"I wish to rise," she proceeded, "and to join the morning prayer; until then I shall only dress in my wrapper: after that I shall dress as becomes me. I know I have nothing to hope either in this world or the next, consequently pride in me is not a sin: the measure of my misery has been filled up; and the only interval of happiness left me, is that between this and death. Dress me, Agnes."

The pause arising from the revulsion of feeling, occasioned by the discovery of her settled insanity, was indeed an exemplification of that grief which lies too deep for tears. None of them could weep, but they looked upon her and each other, with a silent agony, which far transcended the power of clamorous sorrow.

"Children," said her father, whose fortitude, considering the nature of this his great affliction, was worthy of better days; "let us neither look upon our beloved one, nor upon each other. There," said he, pointing upwards, "let us look there. You all know how I loved—how I love *her*. You all know how she loved me; but I cast—or I strive to cast the burthen of my affliction upon Him who has borne ALL for our salvation, and you see I am tearless. Dress the dear child, Agnes, and as she desires it, let her join us at prayer, and may the Lord

who has afflicted us, hearken to our supplications!"

Tenderly and with trembling hands did Agnes dress the beloved girl, and when the fair creature, supported by her two sisters, entered the parlor, never was a more divine picture of beauty seen to shine out of that cloud, with which the mysterious hand of God had enveloped her.

At prayer she knelt as meekly, and with as much apparent devotion as she had ever done in the days of her most rational and earnest piety. But it was woful to see the blighted girl go through all the forms of worship, when it was known that the very habit which actuated her resulted from those virtues, which even insanity could not altogether repress.

When they had arisen from their knees, she again addressed Agnes in a tone of cheerful sweetness, such as she had exhibited in her happier days.

'Agnes, now for our task; and indeed you must perform it with care. Remember that you are about to dress the most beautiful girl in Europe. What a fair cast-a-away am I, Agnes?"

"I hope not a cast-a-way, Jane; but I shall dress you with care and tenderness, notwithstanding."

"Every day I must dress in my best, because when Charles returns, you know it will be necessary that I should justify his choice, by appearing as beautiful as possible."

"Give the innocent her own way," said her father; "give her, in all that may gratify the child, her own way, where it is not directly wrong to do so."

Agnes and she then went up to her room, that she might indulge in that harmless happiness, which the *fiction* of hope had, under the mercy of God, extracted from the *reality* of despair.

When the ceremony of the toilette was over, she and her sister returned to the parlor, and they could notice a slight tinge of color added to her pale cheek, by the proud consciousness of her beauty. The exertion, however, she had undergone, considering her extremely weak and exhausted state of health was more than she could bear long. But a few minutes had elapsed after her reappearance in the parlor, when she said—

“Mamma, I am unwell; I want to be undressed, and to go to bed; I am very faint; help me to bed, mamma—and if you come and stay with me, I shall tell you every thing about my prospects in life—yes, and in death, too; because I have prospects in death—but ah,” she added, shuddering, “they are dark—dark!”

Seldom, indeed, was a family tried like this family; and never was the endurance of domestic love, and its triumph over the chilling habit of affliction, more signally manifested than in the undying tenderness of their hearts and hands, in all that was necessary to her comfort, or demanded by the childish caprices of her malady.

On going up stairs, she kissed them all as usual, but they then discovered, for the first time, in all its bitterness, what a dark and melancholy enjoyment it is to kiss the lips of a maniac, who has loved us, and whom we still must love.

"Jane," said William, struggling to be firm, "kiss me, too, before you go."

"Come to me, William," said she, "for I am not able to go to you. Oh, my brother, if I did not love you, I would be very wicked."

The affectionate young man kissed her, and, as he did, the big tears rolled down his cheeks. He wept aloud.

"I never, never gave her up till now," he exclaimed; "but"—and his face darkened into deep indignation as he spoke, "we shall see about it yet, Jane dear. I shall allow a month or two—she may recover; but if I suffer this to go unav—" he paused; "I meant nothing," he added, "except that I will not despair of her yet."

About ten days restored her to something like health, but it was obvious that her constitution had sustained a shock which it could not long survive. Of this Dr. M'Cormick assured them.

"In so delicate a subject as she is," he added, "we usually find that when reason goes, the physical powers soon follow it. But if my opinion be correct, I think you will have the consolation of seeing her mind clear before she dies. There comes often in such cases what the common people properly, and indeed beautifully, term a light before death, and I think she will have it. As you are unanimous against putting her into a private asylum, you must only watch the sweet girl quietly, and without any appearance of vigilance, allowing her in all that is harmless and indifferent to have her own way. Religious feeling you perceive consti-



tutes a strong feature in her case, the rest is obviously the result of the faithless conduct of Osborne. Poor girl, here she comes apparently quite happy."

Jane entered as he spoke, after having been dressed as usual for the day, in her best apparel. She glanced for a moment at the glass, and readjusted her hair which had, she thought, got a little out of order; after which she said, smiling,

"Why should I fear comparisons? He may come as soon as he pleases. I am ready to receive him, but do you know I think that my papa and mamma are not so fond of me as they ought to be. Is it not a honor to have for their daughter a girl whose beauty is unsurpassed in Europe? I am not proud of it for my own sake but for his."

"Jane, do you know this gentleman, dear?" said her mother.

"Oh yes; that is Dr. McCormick."

"I am glad to see that your health is so much improved, my dear," said the doctor.

"Oh yes," she replied, "I am quite well—that is so far as *this* world is concerned; but for all so happy as I look, you would never guess that I am reprobate. Now could you tell me, doctor, why it is that I look so happy knowing as I do that I am foredoomed to misery?"

"No," he replied, "but you will tell us yourself."

"Why it is because I *do* know it. *Knowing the worst* is often a great consolation, I assure you. I, at least, have felt it so."

"Oh what a noble mind is lost in that sweet girl!" exclaimed the worthy physician.

"But it seems, mamma," she proceeded, "there is a report gone abroad that I am mad. I met yesterday—was it not yesterday, Agnes?—I met a young woman down on the river side, and she asked me if it were true that I was crazed with love, and how do you think I replied, mamma? I said to her, 'if you would avoid misery—misery, mark—never violate truth even indirectly.' I said that solemnly, and would have said more but that Agnes rebuked her for speaking, and then wept. Did you not weep, Agnes?"

"Oh no wonder I should," replied her sister, deeply moved; "the interview she alludes to, doctor, was one that occurred the day before yesterday between her and another poor girl in the neighborhood who is also unsettled, owing to a desertion of a still baser kind. It was becoming too affecting to listen to, and I chid the poor thing off."

"Yes, indeed, she chid her off, and the poor thing as she told me, about to be a bride to-morrow. She said she was in quest of William that they might be married, and asked me if I had seen him. If you do, she added, tell him that Fanny is waiting for him, and that as everything is ready she expects he'll come and marry her to-morrow as he promised. Now, mamma, Agnes said that although she chid her, she wept for her, but why should you weep, Agnes, for a girl who is about to become a bride to-morrow? Surely you did not weep because she was going to be made kappy? Did you?"

"All who are going to become brides are not

about to experience happiness, my dear," replied her sister.

"Oh, I should think so certainly, Agnes," replied Jane; "Fie, fie, dear sister Agnes, do not lay down such doctrine. Did you not see the happy girl we met yesterday—was it yesterday? But no matter, Agnes, we shall not quarrel about it. Come and walk. Good-by, my mamma; doctor, I wish you good morning," and with a grace that was inimitable, she made him a distant, but most respectful curt'sy.

"Oh!" said she, turning back, "if any stranger should arrive during my absence, mamma, send for me immediately; or stay—no, do not—let him meet me at the place appointed; I will be there."

She then took Agnes's arm, for Agnes it was who attended her in all her ramblings, and both proceeded on their every-day saunter through the adjoining fields.

A little time, indeed, proved how very accurate had been the opinion of Dr. M'Cormick; for although Jane was affected by no particular bodily complaint, yet it appeared by every day's observation that she was gradually sinking. In the mean time, three or four months elapsed without bringing about any symptom whatsoever of improvement. Her derangement flashed out into no extraordinary paroxysm, but on the contrary assumed a wild and graceful character, sometimes light and unsettled as the glancing of sunbeams on a disturbed current, and occasionally pensive and beautiful as the beams of an autumnal moon. In all the habits of the

family she was most exact. Her devotional composure at prayer appeared to be fraught with the humblest piety; her attendance at Meeting was remarkably punctual, and her deportment edifying to an extreme degree. The history, too, of her insanity and its cause had gone far and wide, as did the sympathy which it excited. In all her innocent ramblings with Agnes around her father's house, and through the adjoining fields, no rude observation or unmannered gaze ever offended the gentle creature; but on the contrary, the delicate-minded peasant of the north would often turn aside from an apprehension of disturbing her, as well perhaps as out of reverence for the calamity of a creature so very young and beautiful.

Indeed many affecting observations were made, which, could her friends have heard them, would have fallen like balm upon their broken spirits. Full of compassion they were for her sore misfortune, and of profound sympathy for the sorrows of her family.

"Alas the day, my bonnie lady! My heart is sair to see sae lovely a thing gliding about sae unhappy. Black be his gate that had the heart to leave *you*, for rank and wealth, my winsome lassie. Weary on him, and little good may his wealth and rank do him! Oh, wha would hae thoct that the peerless young blossom wad hae been withered so soon, or that the Fawn o' Springvale wad hae ever come to the like o' this. Alas! the day, too, for the friends that nurst you, my bonnie bairn!" and then the kind-hearted matron would wipe her eyes on

seeing the far-loved Fawn of Springvale passing by, unconscious that the fatal arrow which had first struck her was still quivering in her side.

The fourth month had now elapsed, and Jane's malady neither exhibited any change nor the slightest symptom of improvement. William, who had watched her closely all along, saw that no hope of any such consummation existed. He remarked, too, with a bitter sense of the unprincipled injury inflicted on the confiding girl, that every week drew her perceptibly nearer and nearer to the grave. His blood had in fact long been boiling in his veins with an indignation which he could scarcely stifle. He entertained, however, a strong reverence for religion, and had Jane, after a reasonable period, recovered, he intended to leave Osborne to be punished only by his own remorse. There was no prospect, however, of her being restored to reason, and now his determination was finally taken. Nay, so deeply resolved had he been on this as an ultimate step in the event of her not recovering, that soon after Mr. Osborne's return from London, he waited on that gentleman, and declared his indignation at the treachery of his son to be so deep and implacable that he requested of him as a personal favor, to suspend all communication with the unhappy girl's family, lest he might be tempted even by the sight of any person connected with so base a man, to go and pistol him on whatever spot he might be able to find him. This, which was rather harsh to the amiable gentleman, excited in his breast more of sorrow than resentment. But it happened fortu-

ately enough for both parties that a day or two before this angry communication, Dr. M'Cormick had waited upon the latter, and gave it as his opinion that any intercourse between the two families would be highly dangerous to Jane's state of mind, by exciting associations that might bring back to her memory the conduct of his son. The consequence was, that they saw each other only by accident, although Mr. Osborne often sent to inquire privately after Jane's health.

William having now understood that Osborne and his wife resided in Paris, engaged a friend to accompany him thither, for the purpose of demanding satisfaction for the injuries inflicted on his sister. All the necessary arrangements were accordingly made; the very day for their departure was appointed, and a letter addressed to Agnes actually written, to relieve the family from the alarm occasioned by his disappearance, when a communication from Osborne to his father, at once satisfied the indignant young man that his enemy was no longer an object for human resentment.

This requires but brief explanation. Osborne, possessing as he did, ambition, talent, and enthusiasm in a high degree, was yet deficient in that firmness of purpose which is essential to distinction in public or private life. His wife was undoubtedly both beautiful and accomplished, and it is undeniable that his marriage with her opened to him brilliant prospects as a public man. Notwithstanding her beauty, however, their union took place not to gratify his love but his ambition. Jane Sinclair, in

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point of fact, had never been displaced from his affection, for as she was in his eye the most beautiful, so was she in the moments of self-examination, the best beloved. This, however, availed the unhappy girl but little, with a man in whose character ambition was the predominant impulse. To find himself beloved by a young and beautiful woman of wealth and fashion was too much for one who possessed but little firmness and an insatiable thirst after distinction. To jostle men of rank and property out of his path, and to jostle them successfully, when approaching the heart of an heiress, was too much for the vanity of an obscure young man, with only a handsome person and good talents to recommend him. The glare of fashionable life, and the unexpected success of his addresses made him giddy, and despite an ineffaceable conviction of dishonor and treachery, he found himself husband to a rich heiress, and son-in-law to a baronet. And now was he launched in full career upon the current of fashionable dissipation, otherwise called high life. This he might have borne as well as the other votaries of polished profligacy, were it not for one simple consideration—he had neither health nor constitution, nor, to do the early lover of Jane Sinclair justice, heart for the modes and habits of that society, through the vortices of which he now found himself compelled to whirl. He was not, in fact, able to keep pace with the rapid motions of his fashionable wife, and the result in a very short time was, that their hearts were discovered to be anything but congenial—in fact anything but

united. The absence of domestic happiness joined to that remorse which his conduct towards the unassuming but beautiful object of his first affection entailed upon a heart that, notwithstanding its errors, was incapable of foregoing its own convictions, soon broke down the remaining stamina of his constitution, and before the expiration of three months, he found himself hopelessly smitten by the same disease which had been so fatal to his family. His physicians told him that if there were any chance of his recovery, it must be in the efficacy of his native air; and his wife with fashionable apathy, expressed the same opinion, and hoped that he might, after a proper sojourn at home, be enabled to join her early in the following season at Naples. Up to this period he had heard nothing of the mournful consequences which his perfidy had produced upon the intellect of our unhappy Jane. His father, who in fact still entertained hopes of her ultimate sanity, now that his son was married, deemed it unnecessary to embitter his peace by a detail of the evils he had occasioned her. But when, like her brother William, he despaired of her recovery, he considered it only an act of justice towards her and her family to lay before Charles the hideousness of his guilt together with its woful consequences. This melancholy communication was received by him the day after his physicians had given him over, for in fact the prescription of his native air was only a polite method of telling him that there was no hope. His conscience, which recent circumstances had already awakened, was not



prepared for intelligence so dreadful. Remorse, or rather repentance seized him, and he wrote to beg that his father would suffer a penitent son to come home to die.

This letter, the brief contents of which we have given, his father submitted to Mr. Sinclair, whose reply was indeed characteristic of the exalted Christian, who can forget his own injury in the distress of his enemy.

"Let him come," said the old man; "our resentments have long since passed away, and why should not yours? He has now a higher interest to look to than any arising from either love or ambition. His immortal soul is at stake, and if we can reconcile him to heaven, the great object of existence will after all be secured. God forbid that our injuries should stand in the way of his salvation. Allow me," he added, "to bring this letter home, that I may read it to my family, with one exception, of course. Alas! it contains an instructive lesson."

This was at once acceded to by the other, and they separated.

When William heard the particulars of Osborne's melancholy position, he of course gave up the hostility of his purpose, and laid before his friend a history of the circumstances connected with his brief and unhappy career.

"He is now a dying man," said William, "to whom this life, its idle forms and unmeaning usages, are as nothing, or worse than nothing. A higher tribunal than the guilty spirit of this world's honor

will demand satisfaction from him for his baseness towards unhappy Jane. To that tribunal I leave him; but whether he live or die, I will never look upon my insane sister, without thinking of him as a villain, and detesting his very name and memory."

If these sentiments be considered ungenerous, let it be remembered that they manifested less his resentment to Osborne, than the deep and elevate affection which he bore his sister, for whose injuries he felt much more indignantly than he would have done for his own.

Jane, however, from this period forth began gradually to break down, and her derangement, though still inoffensive and harmeles, assumed a more anxious and melancholy expression. This might arise, to be sure, from the depression of spirits occasioned by a decline of health. But from whatever cause it proceeded, one thing was evident, that an air of deep dejection settled upon her countenance and whole deportment. She would not, for instance, permit Agnes in their desultory rambles to walk by her side, but besought her to attend at a distance behind her.

"I wish to be alone, dear Agnes," she said, "but notwithstanding that, I do not wish to be without you. I might have been some time ago the Queen of beauty, but now, Agnes, I am the Queen of Sorrow."

"You have had your share of sorrow, my poor stricken creature," replied Agnes, heavily.

"But there is, Agnes, a melancholy beauty in

sorrow—it is so sweet to be sad. Did you ever see a single star in the sky, Agnes?"

"Yes, love, often."

"Well, that is like sorrow, or rather that is like me. Does it not always seem to mourn, and to mourn alone, but the moment that another star arises then the spell is broken, and it seems no more to mourn in the solitude of heaven."

"Agnes looked at her with sad but earnest admiration, and exclaimed in a quivering voice as she pressed her to her bosom,

"Oh Jane, Jane, how my heart loves you! The day is coming, my sister—our sweetest, our youngest, our dearest—the day is coming when we will see you no more—when your sorrows and your joys, whether real or imaginary—when all the unsettled evidences of goodness, which nothing could destroy, will be gone; and you with all you've suffered—with all your hopes and fears, will be no longer present for our hearts to gather about. Oh my sister, my sister! how will the old man live? He will not—he will not. We see already that he suffers, and what it costs him to be silent. His gait is feeble and his form is already bent since the hand of affliction has come upon you. Yet, Jane, Jane, we could bear all, provided you were permitted to remain with us! Your voice—your voice—and is the day so soon to come when we will not hear it? when our eyes will no more rest upon you? And"—added the affectionate girl, now overcome by her feelings, laying her calm sister's head at the same time upon her bosom, "and when those locks so

brown and rich that your Agnes's hands have so often dressed, will be mouldering in the grave, and that face—oh, the seal of death is upon your pale, pale cheek, my sister!—my sister!" She could say no more, but kissed Jane's lips, and pressing her to her heart, she wept in a long fit of irrepressible grief.

Jane looked up with a pensive gaze into Agnes's face, and as she calmly dried her sister's tears, said:—

"Is it not strange, Agnes, that I who am the Queen of Sorrow cannot weep. I resemble some generous princess, who though rich, gives away her wealth to the needy in such abundance that she is always poor herself. I who weep not, supply you all with tears, and cannot find one for myself when I want it. Indeed so it seems, my sister."

"It is true, indeed, Jane—too true, too true, my darling."

"Agnes, I could tell you a secret. It is not without reason that I am the Queen of Sorrow."

"Alas, it is not, my sweet innocent."

"I have the secret here," said she, putting her hand to her bosom, and no one suspects that I have. The cause why I am the Queen of Sorrow is indeed here—here. But come, I do not much like this arbour somehow. There is, I think, a reason for it, but I forget it. Let us walk elsewhere."

This was the arbour of osiers in which Osborne in the enthusiasm of his passion, said that if during

his travels he found a girl more beautiful, he would cease to love Jane, and to write to her—an expression which, as the reader knows, exercised afterwards a melancholy power upon her intellect.

Agnes and she proceeded as she desired, to saunter about, which they did for the most part in silence, except when she wished to stop and make an observation of her own free will. Her step was slow, her face pale, and her gait, alas, quite feeble, and evidently that of a worn frame and a broken heart.

For sometime past, she seemed to have forgotten that she was a foredoomed creature, and a cast-away, at least her allusions to this were less frequent than before—a circumstance which Dr. M'Cormick said he looked upon as the most favorable symptoms he had yet seen in her case.

Upon this day, however, she sauntered about in silence, and passed from place to place, followed by Agnes; like the waning moon, accompanied by her faithful and attendant star.

After having passed a green field, she came upon the road with an intention of crossing it, and going down by the river to the yew tree, which during all her walks she never failed to visit. Here it was that, for the second time, she met poor Fanny Morgan, the unsettled victim of treachery more criminal still than that which had been practised upon herself.

"You are the bonnie Fawn of Springvale that's gone mad with love," said the unhappy creature.

"No, no," replied Jane, "You are mistaken. I am the Queen of Sorrow."

"I am to be married to-morrow," said the other. "Everything's ready, but I can't find William. Did you see him? But maybe you may, and if you do—oh speak a word for me, but one word, and tell him that all's ready, and that Fanny's waiting, and that he must not break his promise."

"You are very happy to be married to-morrow."

"Yes," replied the other smiling—"I am happy enough now; but when we are married—when William makes me his wife, people won't look down on me any longer. I wish I could find him, for oh my heart is sick, and will be sick, until I see him. If he knew how I was treated, he would not suffer it. If you see him, will you promise to tell him that all's ready, and that I am waiting for him?—Will you, my bonnie lady?"

"I could tell you a secret," said Jane—"they don't know at home that I got the letter at all—but I did, and have read it—he is coming home—coming home to die—that's what makes me the Queen of Sorrow. Do you ever weep?"

"No, but they took the baby from me, and beat me—my brother John did; but William was not near to take my part?"

"Who will you have at the wedding?"

"I have no bride's maid yet—but may be you would be that for me, my bonnie lady. John said I disgraced them; but surely I only loved William. I wish to-morrow was past, and that he would re-

move my shame—I could then be proud, but now I cannot.”

“And what are you ashamed of? It is no shame to love him.”

“No, no, and all would be well enough, but that they beat me and took away the baby—my brother John did.”

“But did William ever swear to you, that if he met a girl more beautiful, he would cease to love you, and to write to you?”

“No, he promised to marry me.”

“And do you know why he does not?”

“If I could find him he would. Oh, if you see him, will you tell him that I’m waiting, and that all’s ready?”

“You,” said Jane, “have been guilty of a great sin.”

“So they said, and that I brought myself to shame too. But William will take away that if I could find him.”

“You told an indirect falsehood to your father—you concealed the truth—and now the hand of God is upon you. There is nothing for you now but death.”

“I don’t like death—it took away my baby—if they would give me back my baby I would not care—except John—I would hide from him.”

“William’s married to another and dying, so that you may become a queen of sorrow too—would you like that—sorrow is a sweet thing.”

“How could he marry another, and be promised to me?”

"Is your heart cold?" enquired Jane.

"No," replied the other smiling, "indeed I am to be married to-morrow?"

"Let me see you early in the morning," said Jane—"if you do, perhaps I may give you this," showing the letter. "Your heart cannot be cold if you keep it—I carry it here," said she, putting her hand to her bosom—"but I need not, for mine will be warm enough soon."

"Mine's warm enough too," said the other.

"If William comes, you will find poison on his lips," said Jane, "and that will kill you—the poison of polluted lips would kill a thousand faithful hearts—it would—and there is nothing for treachery but sorrow. Be sorrowful—be sorrowful—it is the only thing to ease a deserted heart—it eases mine."

"But then they say you're crazed with love."

"No, no—with sorrow; but listen, never violate truth—never be guilty of falsehood; if you do, you will become unhappy; and if you do not, the light of God's countenance will shine upon you."

"Indeed it is no lie, for as sure as you stand there to-morrow is the day."

"I think I love you," said the gentle and affectionate Jane. "Will you kiss me? my sister Agnes does when I ask her."

"Why should'nt I, my bonnie, bonnie lady? Why should'nt I? Oh! indeed, but you are bonnie, and yet to be crazed with love! Well, well, he will never comb a grey head that deserted the bonnie Fawn of Springvale."



Jane, who was much the taller, stooped, and with a smile of melancholy, but unconscious sympathy, kissed the forlorn creature's lips, and after beckoning Agnes to follow her, passed on.

That embrace! Who could describe its character? Oh! man, man, and woman, woman, think of this!

Agnes, after Jane and she had returned home, found that a search had been instigated during their absence for the letter which Charles had written to his father. Mr. Sinclair, anxious to return it, had missed it from among his papers, and felt seriously concerned at its disappearance.

"I only got it to read to the family," said he, "and what am I to say, or what can I say, when Mr. Osborne asks me, as he will, to return it? Agnes, do you know any thing of it?"

Agnes, who, from the interview between Jane and the unsettled Fanny Morgan, saw at once that it had got, by some means unknown to the family, into her sister's hands, knew not exactly in what terms to reply. She saw too, that Jane looked upon the possession of the letter as a secret, and in her presence she felt that considering her sister's view of the matter, and her state of mind, she could not, without pressing too severely on the gentle creature's sorrow, inform her father of the truth.

"Papa," said the admirable and considerate girl, "the letter I have no doubt will be found. I beg of you papa, I beg of you not to be uneasy about it; it *will* be found."

This she said in a tone as significant as possible,

with a hope that her father might infer from her manner that Jane had the letter in question.

The old man looked at Agnes, and appeared as if striving to collect the meaning of what she said, but he was not long permitted to remain in any doubt upon the subject.

Jane approached him slowly, and putting her hand to her bosom, took out the letter and placed it upon the table before him.

"It came from *him*," said she, "and that was the reason why I put it next my heart. You know, papa, he is dying, and this letter is a message of death. I thought that such a message was more proper from him to me than to any one else. I have carried it next my heart, and you may take it now, papa. The message has been delivered, and I feel that death is here—for that is all that he and it have left me. I am the star of sorrow—pale and mournful in the lonely sky; yet," she added as she did on another occasion, "we shall not all die, but we shall be changed."

"My sweet child," said Mr. Sinclair, "I am not angry with you about the letter; I only wish you to keep your spirits up, and not be depressed so much as you are." She appeared quite exhausted, and replied not for some time; at length she said:

"Papa, mamma, have I done any thing wrong? If I have tell me. Oh, Agnes, Agnes, but my heart is heavy."

"As sure as heaven is above us, Henry," whispered her mother to Mr. Sinclair, "she is upon the point of being restored to her senses."

"Alas, my dear," he replied, "who can tell? It may happen as you say. Oh how I shall bless God if it does! but still, what, what will it be but, as Dr. McCormick said, the light before death? The child is dying, and she will be taken from us for ever, for ever!"

Jane, whilst they spoke, looked earnestly and with a struggling eye into the countenances of those who were about her; but again she smiled pensively, and said:

"I am—I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky. Jane Sinclair is no more—the Fawn of Springvale is no more—I am now nothing but sorrow. I *was* the queen, but now I am the *star* of sorrow. Oh! how I long to set in heaven!"

She was then removed to bed, where with her mother and her two sisters beside her, she lay quiet as a child, repeating to herself—"I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky; but now I know that I will soon set in heaven. Jane Sinclair is no more—the Fawn of Springvale is no more. No—I am now the star of sorrow!" The melancholy beauty of the sentiment seemed to soothe her, for she continued to repeat these words, sometimes aloud and sometimes in a sweet voice, until she fell gently asleep.

"She is asleep," said Agnes, looking upon her still beautiful but mournful features, now, indeed composed into an expression of rooted sorrow. They all stood over the bed, and looked upon her for many minutes. At length Agnes clasped her hands,

and with a suffocating voice, as if her heart would break, exclaimed, "Oh mother, mother," and rushed from the room that she might weep aloud without awakening the afflicted one who slept.

Another week made a rapid change upon her for the worse, and it was considered necessary to send for Dr. M'Cormick, as from her feebleness and depression they feared that her dissolution was by no means distant, especially as she had for the last three days been confined to her bed. The moment he saw her, his opinion confirmed their suspicions.

"Deal gently with her now," said he; "a fit or a paroxysm of any kind would be fatal to her. The dear girl's unhappy race is run—her sands are all but numbered. This moment her thread of life is not stronger than a gossamer." Ere his departure on that occasion, he brought Mr. Sinclair aside and thus addressed him:

"Are you aware, sir, that Mr. Osborne's son has returned."

"Not that he has actually returned," replied Mr. Sinclair, "but I know that he is daily expected."

"He reached his father's house," continued the doctor, "early yesterday; and such a pitiable instance of remorse as he is I have never seen, and I hope never shall. His cry is to see your daughter, that he may hear his forgiveness from her own lips. He says he cannot die in hope or in happiness, unless she pardons him. This, however, must not be—I mean an interview between them—for it would most assuredly prove fatal to himself; and should

she see him only for a moment, that moment were her last."

"I will visit the unhappy young man myself," said her father; "as for an interview it cannot be thought of—even if they could bear it, Charles forgets that he is the husband of another woman, and that, consequently, Jane is nothing to him—and that such a meeting would be highly—grossly improper."

"Your motives, though perfectly just, are different from mine," said the doctor—"I speak merely as a medical man. He wants not this to hurry him into the grave—he will be there soon enough."

"Let him feel repentance towards God," said the old man heavily—"towards my child it is now unavailing. It is my duty, as it shall be my endeavor, to fix this principle in his heart."

The Doctor then departed, having promised to see Jane on the next day but one. This gentleman's opinion, however, with respect to his beautiful patient, was not literally correct; still although she lingered longer than could naturally be anticipated from her excessive weakness, yet he was right in saying that her thread of life resembled that of the gossamer.

In the course of the same evening, she gave the first symptom of a lucid interval; still in point of fact her mind was never wholly restored to sanity. She had slept long and soundly, and after awaking rang the bell for some one to come to her. This was unusual, and in a moment she was attended by Agnes and her mother.

"I am very weak, my dear mamma," said she, "and although I cannot say that I feel any particular complaint—I speak of a bodily one—yet I feel that my strength is gone, and that you will not be troubled with your poor Jane much longer."

"Do not think so, dear love, do not think so," replied her mother; "bear up, my darling, bear up, and all may yet be well."

"Agnes," said she, "come to me. I know not—perhaps—dear Agnes——"

She could utter no more. Agnes flew to her, and they wept in each other's arms for many minutes.

"I would be glad to see my papa," she said, "and my dear Maria and William. Oh mamma, mamma, I suspect that I have occasioned you all much sorrow."

"No, no, no—but more joy now, my heart's own treasure, a thousand times more joy than you ever occasioned us of sorrow. Do not think it, oh, do not think it,"

Her father, who had just returned from visiting Charles Osborne, now entered her bed room, accompanied by William and his two daughters—for Agnes had flown to inform them of the happy turn which had taken place in Jane's malady. When he entered, she put her white but wasted hand out, and raised her head to kiss him.

"My dear papa," said she, "it is so long, I think, since I have seen you; and Maria, too. Oh, dear Maria, come to me—but you must not weep, dear sister. Alas, Maria,"—for the poor girl wept bitterly—"oh, my sister, but your heart is good and

loving. William"—she kissed him, and looking tenderly into his face, said,

"Why, oh, why are you all in tears? Imitate my papa, dear William. I am so glad to see you! Papa, I have been—I fear I have been—but, indeed, I remember when I dreaded as much. My heart, my heart is heavy when I think of all the grief and affliction I must have occasioned you; but you will all forgive your poor Jane, for you know she would not do so if she could avoid it. Papa, how pale and careworn you look! as, indeed, you all do. Oh, God help me. I see, I see—I read on your sorrowful faces the history of all you have suffered on my account."

They all cherished, and petted, and soothed the sweet creature; and, indeed, rejoiced over her as if she had been restored to them from the dead.

"Papa, would you get me the Bible, she continued, I wish if possible to console you and the rest; and mamma, you will think when I am gone of that which I am about to show you; think of it all of you, for indeed an early death is sometimes a great blessing to those who are taken away. Alas! who can say when it is *not*?"

They assisted her to sit up in the bed, and after turning over the leaves of the Bible, she read in a voice of low impressive melody the first verse of the fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah.

"The righteous perisheth, and no man taketh it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, *none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. HE SHALL ENTER INTO PEACE.*"

"Oh! many a death," she continued, "is wept for and lamented by friends and relatives, who consider not that those for whom they weep *may* be taken away from the *evil to come*. I feel that I am unable to speak much, but it is your Jane's request, that the consolation to be found, not only in this passage, but in this book, may be applied to your hearts when I am gone."

This effort, slight as it was, enfeebled her much, and she lay silent for some time; and such was their anxiety, neither to excite nor disturb her, that although their hearts were overflowing they restrained themselves, so far as to permit no startling symptoms of grief to be either seen or heard. After a little time, however, she spoke again:—

"My poor bird," said she, "I fear I have neglected it. Dear Agnes would you let me see it—I long to see it." Agnes in a few minutes returned and placed the bird in her bosom. She caressed it for a short time, and then looking at it earnestly said—

"Is it possible, that you too, my Ariel, are drooping?"

This indeed was true. The bird had been for some time past as feeble and delicate as if its fate were bound up with that of its unhappy mistress—whether it was that the sight of it revived some recollection that disturbed her, or whether this brief interval of reason was as much as exhausted nature could afford on one occasion, it is difficult to say; but the fact is, that after looking on it for some



time, she put her hand to her bosom and asked, "Where, where is the letter?"

"What letter, my darling?" said her father.

"Is not Charles unhappy and dying?" she said.

"He is ill, my love," said her father, "but not dying, we trust."

"It is not here," she said, searching her bosom, "it is not here—but it matters nothing now—it was a message of death, and the message has been delivered. Sorrow—sorrow—sorrow—how beautiful is that word—there is but one other in the language that surpasses it, and that is *mourn*. Oh! how beautiful is that too—how delicately expressive.

*Weep* is violent; but *mourn*, the gradual but tearless grief that wastes gently—that disappoints death, for we die not but only cease to be. I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky—well, that is one consolation—when I set I shall set in heaven."

They knew by experience that any attempt at comfort would then produce more evil than good. For near two hours she uttered to herself in a low chant, "I am the star of sorrow, &c.," after which she sank as before into a profound slumber.

Her intervals of reason, as death approached, were mercifully extended. Whilst they lasted, nothing could surpass the noble standard of Christian duty by which her feelings and moral sentiments were regulated. For a fortnight after this, she sank with such a certain but imperceptible approximation towards death that the eyes even of

affection could scarcely notice the gradations of its approach.

During this melancholy period, her father was summoned upon an occasion which was strongly calculated to try the sincerity of his Christian professions. Not a day passed that he did not forget his own sorrows, and the reader knows how heavily they pressed upon him—in order to prepare the mind of his daughter's destroyer for the awful change which death was about to open upon his soul. He reasoned—he prayed—he wept—he triumphed—yes, he triumphed, nor did he ever leave the death-bed of Charles Osborne, until he had succeeded in fixing his heart upon that God "who willeth not the death of a sinner."

A far heavier trial upon the Christian's fortitude, however, was soon to come upon him. Jane, as the reader knows, was *now* at the very portals of heaven. For hours in the day she was perfectly rational; but again she would wander into her chant of sorrow, as much from weakness as from the original cause of her malady; for upon this it is difficult if not impossible to determine.

On the last evening, however, that her father ever attended Charles Osborne, he came home as usual, and was about to enquire how Jane felt, when Maria came to him with eyes which weeping had made red, and said—

"Oh papa—I fear—we all fear, that—I cannot utter it—I cannot—I cannot—Oh papa, at last the hour we fear is come."

"Remember, my child, that you are speaking,"

said this heroic Christian, "remember that you are speaking to a Christian father, who will not set up his affections, nor his weaknesses, nor his passions against the will of God."

"Oh, but papa—Jane, Jane"—she burst into bitter tears for more than a minute, and then added—"Jane, papa, is dying—*leaving us at last!*"

"Maria," said he, calmly, "leave me for some minutes. You know not, dear child, what my struggles have been. Leave me now—this is *the trial* I fear—and now must I, and so must you all—but now must *I*—Oh, leave me, leave me."

He knelt and prayed; but in less than three minutes, Agnes, armed with affection—commanding and absolute it was from that loving sister—came to him.

She laid her hand upon his arm, and pressed it. "*Papa!*"—"I know it," said he, "she is going; but, Agnes, we must be *Christians*."

"We must be *sisters*, papa; and ah, papa, surely, surely this is a moment in which the father may forget the Christian. Jesus wept for a stranger; what would He not have done for a brother or a sister?"

"Agnes, Agnes," said he, in a tone of sorrow, inexpressibly deep, "is this taxing *me* with want of affection for—for—"

She flung herself upon his breast. "Oh, papa, forgive me, forgive me—I am not capable of appreciating the high and holy principles from which you act. Forgive me; and surely if you ever forgave me on any occasion, you will on this."

"Dear Agnes," said he, "you scarcely ever required my forgiveness, and less now than ever—even if you had. Come—I will go; and may the Lord support and strengthen us all! Your mother—your poor mother!"

On entering the room of the dying girl, they found her pale cheek laid against that of her other parent, whose arms were about her, as if she would hold them in love and tenderness for ever. When she saw them approach, she raised her head feebly, and said—

"Is that my papa? my beloved papa?"

The old man raised his eyes once more to heaven for support—but for upwards of half a minute the muscles of his face worked with power that evinced the full force of what he suffered—

"I am here, I am here," he at length said, with difficulty.

"And that is Agnes?" she enquired. "Agnes, come near me; and do not be angry, dear Agnes that I die on mamma's bosom and not on yours."

Agnes could only seize her pale hand and bathe it in tears. "Angry with you—you living angel—oh, who ever was, or could be, my sister!"

"You all love me too much," she said. Maria, it grieves me to see your grief so excessive—and William, oh why, why will you weep so? Is it because I am about to leave the pains and sorrows of this unhappy life, and to enter into peace, that you all grieve thus bitterly. Believe me—and I know this will relieve my dear papa's heart—and all your hearts—will it not yours, my mamma?—it is this—

your Jane, your own Jane IS NOT AFRAID TO DIE. Her hopes are fixed on the Rock of Ages—the Rock of her salvation. I know, indeed, that my brief existence has been marked at its close with care and sorrow; but these cares and sorrows have brought me the sooner to that place where all tears shall be wiped from my eyes. Let my fate, too, be a warning to young creatures like myself, never to suffer their affection for any object to overmaster their sense and their reason. I cherished the passion of my heart too much, when I ought to have checked and restrained it—and now, what is the consequence? Why, that I go down in the very flower of my youth to an early grave.”

Agnes caught the dear girl’s hands when she had concluded, and looking with a breaking heart into her face, said—

“And oh, my sister, my sister, are you leaving us—are you leaving us for ever, my sister? Life will be nothing to me, my Jane, without you—how, how will your Agnes live?”

“I doubt we are only disturbing our cherished one,” said her father. Let our child’s last moments be calm—and her soul—oh let it not be drawn back from its hopes, to this earth and its affections.”

“Papa, pray for me, and they will join with you—pray for your poor Jane while it is yet time—the prayer of the righteous availeth much.”

Earnest, indeed, and melancholy, was that last prayer offered up on behalf of the departing girl. When it was concluded there was a short silence,

as if they wished not to break in upon what they considered the aspirations of the dying sufferer. At length the mother thought she felt her child's cheek press against her own with a passive weight that alarmed her.

"Jane, my love," said she, "do you not feel your soul refreshed by your father's prayer?"

No answer was returned to this, and on looking more closely at her countenance of sorrow, they found that her gentle spirit had risen on the incense of her father's prayer to heaven. The mother clasped her hands, whilst the head of her departed daughter still lay upon her bosom.

"Oh God! oh God!" said she, "our idol is gone—is gone!"

"Gone!" exclaimed the old man; "now, oh Lord, surely—surely the father's grief may be allowed," and he burst, as he spoke, into a paroxysm of incontrollable sorrow.

"And what am I to do—who am—oh woe, woe—who *was* her mother?"

To the scene that ensued, what pen could do justice—we cannot, and consequently leave it to the imagination of our readers, whose indulgence we crave for our many failures and errors in the conduct of this melancholy story.

Thus passed the latter days of the unhappy Jane Sinclair, of whose life nothing more appropriate need be said, than that which she herself uttered immediately before her death:

"Let my fate be a warning to young creatures like myself never to suffer their affection for any

object to overmaster their sense and their reason. I cherished the passion of my heart too much, when I ought to have checked and restrained it—and now, what is the consequence? Why, that I go down in the very flower of my youth to an early grave.”

On the day after her dissolution, an incident occurred, which threw the whole family into renewed sorrow:—Early that morning, Ariel, her dove, was found dead upon her bosom, as she lay out in the composure of death.

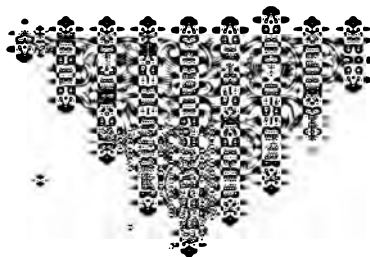
“Remove it not,” said her father; “it shall be buried with her;” and it was accordingly placed upon her bosom in the coffin.

Seldom was a larger funeral train seen, than that which attended her remains to the grave-yard; and rarely was sorrow so deeply felt for any being so young and so unhappy, as that which moved all hearts for the fate of the beautiful but unfortunate Jane Sinclair—the far-famed Fawn of Springvale.

One other fact we have to record: Jane’s funeral had arrived but a few minutes at the grave, when another funeral train appeared slowly approaching the place of death. It was that of Charles Osborne!

The last our readers may have anticipated. From the day of Jane’s death the heart of the old man gradually declined. He looked about him in vain for his beloved one. Night and day her name was never out of his mouth. It is true he prayed, he read, he availed himself of all that the pious exercises of a Christian man could contribute to the alleviation of his sorrow. But it was in vain. In vain did his wife,

to console him. He is a loved one  
and he will remain be-  
lieving in the length, and  
the light about it. At the  
old man's death his be-





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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7. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

8.

# LHA DHU;

OR,

## THE DARK DAY.

BY

WILLIAM CARLETON,

Author of "Valentine McClutchy," "Traits and Stories of the Irish  
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**THERE** is no country in the world whose scenery is more sweetly diversified, or more delicately shaded away into that exquisite variety of surface which presents us with those wavy outlines of beauty that softly melt into each other, than is that of our own green island. Alas ! how many deep valleys, wild glens, green meadows, and pleasant hamlets, lie scattered over the bosom of a country, peopled by inhabitants who are equally moved by the impulses of mirth and sorrow; each valley, and glen, and pleasant hamlet marked by some tearful remembrance of humble calamity of which the world never hears. How little do its proud nobility know of the fair and still beauty which marks the unbroken silence of its most delightful retreats, or of the unassuming records of love or sorrow, which pass down through a single generation, and are soon lost in the rapid stream of life. We do not love to remember sorrow, but its traces, notwithstanding, are always the most uneffaceable, and, what is strange as true, its mournful imprint remains ever

the longest upon the heart that is most mirthful. We talk not now of the hollow echo, like mirth, which comes from thousands only because the soul is wanting. No; but we say that as the diamond is found in the darkness of the mine, as the lightning shoots with most vivid flashes from the gloomiest cloud, so does mirthfulness frequently proceed from a heart susceptible of the deepest melancholy. Many and true are the simple tales of Irish life which could prove this. Many a fair laughing girl who has danced in happiness, light as a mote in the sunbeam, has been suddenly left in darkness, bowed down in youth and beauty to the grave, and though the little circle of which she was the centre may have been disturbed by her untimely fate, yet in brief space, except to a few yearning and stricken hearts who could *not* forget her who was once their pride and hope, her memory has passed away like a solitary bird, viewed as it goes over us, and followed wistfully, by the eye, until by degrees it lessens and lessens—becomes dim—then fades into a speck, and ultimately melts into the blue distance of heaven. One such a “simple annal,” brought about by the inscrutable hand that guides the destinies of life, we are now about to present to our readers. Were it the mere creation of our fancy, it might receive many of those embellishments at our hand with which we scruple not to adorn the shadowy idealities of fiction. It is, however, one of those distressing realities so often produced by the indulgence of vehement passion, that we are compelled by the melancholy severity of its truth

to give the details of, not, alas, as we could have wished them to happen, but simply as they occurred.

The village of *Ballydhas* was situated in the bosom of as sweet a valley as ever gladdened the eye and the heart of a man to look upon. Contentment, peace, and prosperity, walked step by step with its happy inhabitants. The people were marked by a pastoral simplicity of manners, such as is still to be found in some of the remote and secluded hamlets of Ireland. The vale was green and shelving, having its cornfields, its pasturage, and its patches of fir, poplar, and mountain-ash intermingled, and creeping up on each side in wild but quiet beauty to the very mountain tops that enclosed it. At the head of the glen reposed a small clear sheet of water, as calm and unruffled as the village itself. By this sweet lake was fed the pure stream which murmured down between the banks, here and there opened, and occasionally covered by hazel, black-thorn, or birches. As it approached the village the scenery about it became more soft and tranquil. The banks spread away into meadows flower-spangled and green; the fields became richer; the corn waved to the soft breezes of summer; the noon-day smoke of the dinner fires rose up, and was gently borne away to the more wide-spread scene of grandeur and cultivation that lay in the champaign country below it. On each side of the glen were masses of rock and precipices, just large enough to give sufficient wildness and picturesque beauty to a view which in itself was calm and serene. In the

distance about a mile to the north, stood out a bold but storm-vexed headland, that heaved back the mighty swell of the Atlantic, of which a glimpse could be caught from an eminence above the village. Nothing indeed could be finer than the booming fury of the giant billows, as they shivered themselves into spray, and thundered around the gloomy caverns of the headland, especially when contrasted with the calm sense of peace and security which reposed upon the neat white village in the glen.

How sweet of a summer Sabbath morning to sit upon the brow of this delightful valley, and contemplate in the light dreams of a happy heart its humble images of all that is pure, and peaceful, and soothing in life; the little bustle of preparation for the cheerful but solemn duties of the day; the glad voices of bright faced boys and girls, eager to get on their Sunday clothes; the busy stirring about of each tucked-up matron, washing, and combing, and pinning her joyous little ones; and the contented father now dressed, placidly smoking his after-breakfast pipe, looking upon their little cares, and their struggles for precedence in being decked out with their humble finery; now rebuking an elder boy for his impatience and want of consideration in not allowing his juniors to get first dressed, and again soothing a younger one until *his* turn came.

"Barney, troth you ought to have more sinse, avick, than to be quarrellin' wid poor Jemmy about gettin' an you. Don't you know he's but a child, an' must of coorse get his little things an before

you, espishially as this is the first Sunday of the cra-thur's new jacket an' throwers. Blood alive, Barney, be manly, and don't make comparishment wid a *pasitah* (child.) I hope you've got off your lesson in the catechiz this mornin', and that you wont have to hang down your head wid the blush of shame among the *bouchaleens* (little boys,) in the chapel to-day. Go 'way, avick, and rehearse it, an' whin your mother finishes him, and Dick, and little Mary, she'll have yourself as clane as a new sixpence."

Then came the moment when the neat and well-dressed groups issued out of their happy homes, and sought in cheerful companionship with those of different creeds, their respective places of worship; for, gentle reader, the inhabitants of Ballydhas were, in point of religion, some Protestant, some Roman Catholic, and others Presbyterian. Many a time have we seen them proceed together in peace and friendship along the same road, until they separated either to church, to meeting, or to chapel; and again returned on their way home, in a spirit equally cordial and kind. The demon of political discord and religious rancor had not come among them. Each class in the parish worshipped God after its own manner. All were happy, and industrious, and independent, for they had not then been taught that they were slaves and natural enemies groaning under the penal yoke of oppression.

Their fairs and markets were equally peaceful. Neither faction-fight nor party fight ever stained



the streets with blood. The whoop of strife was never raised by neighbor against neighbor, nor the coat trailed, nor the caubeen thrown up into the air to challenge an opposite faction. There was, in truth, none of all this. The people were moral and educated. Religion they attended with that decorous sense of decency which always results from a sincere perception of its obligations and influence.

Yet were they not without their sports and rustic amusements. Where the bitterness of malignity is absent, cheerfulness has full play, and candour, ever open and benevolent, is the exponent of mirth and good will. Though their fairs and markets were undisturbed by the savage violence of mutual conflict, yet were they enlivened by the harmless pastimes which throw the charm of uncorrupted life over the human heart and the innocent scenes from which it draws in its amusements. Life is harsh enough, and we are no friends to those who would freeze its genial current by the gloomy chill of ascetic severity.

Within about two miles of Ballydhas stood the market town of the parish. It also bore the traces of peace and happiness. Around it lay a rich fertile country, studded with warm homesteads, waving fields, and residences of a higher rank, at once elegant and fashionable. The gentry were not, it is true, of the highest class; but in lieu of that they were kind, considerate, and what was before all, *resident*. If an accidental complaint happened to be preferred by one man against another, they gene-

rally were qualified by a knowledge of their characters to administer justice between them, without the risk of being misled by misrepresentation. This prevented many complaints founded in malice or party-spirit, and consequently reduced litigation to an examination of the very few cases in which actual injury had been sustained.

Many a fair day have we witnessed in this quiet and thriving market town. And it is sweet to us—yes, intensely sweet to leave, for a moment, the hollow and slippery pathways of artificial life—of that unfeeling, unholy and loathsome selfishness of heart, and soul, and countenance, which marks as with a brand of infamy, the fictions of fashionable and metropolitan society, where every person and profession you meet, is a lie or a libel to be guarded against. Yes, it is pleasant to us to leave all this, and to go back in imagination to a fair day in the town of Ballaghmore. Like an annual festival, it stole upon us with many yearning wish, that time, at least for a month before, should be annihilated. And when the fair morning came, what a drifting tide of people, cows, sheep, horses and pigs, passed on in the eager tumult of business, before our eyes. The comfortable farmer in his best gray frize; the young man in spruce corduroy breeches, home-made blue coat, and bran new hat; the tidy maiden with neat bunch of yarn, spun by her own fingers, giving sufficient proof to her bachelor that a young woman of industrious habits uniformly makes the best wife for a poor man. Various, indeed, were the classes that, in multitudinous groups, drifted towards the

fair green. The spruce, well-mounted horse-jockey with bottle-green coat closely buttoned, tight buckskin inexpressibles, long-lashed hunting-whip, and top-boots; the drover on his plump hack, pacing slowly after his fat beeves; the gentleman farmer, trundling along in his gig, or trotting smartly on a bit of half-blood. Here go a family group, the children with new hats and ruffles, grandfather a little behind, with the hand of an own pet boy or a girl in his; observe the joy of their faces; what complacent happiness on the ruddy countenance of the healthy old man. The parents are also happy, but betray the unconscious anxiety of those who love their children, and are sensible of the serious duties inseparable from their condition; the four little ones know not the cares of affection, and, consequently, their looks are full of delight, eagerness, and curiosity. What a tide of bewildered interrogatories does the fifth urchin pour upon the ear of the old grandfather, who is foolish enough to stop the whole group, in order to relate the precocious pertinency of some particular query. There goes a snug farmer, his wife, and good-looking daughters, seated upon a farm-car that is trussed with straw, covered by a blue quilt. We will wager that the "good woman" has somewhere about the premises a few cakes of hard griddle-bread, to eat when they get hungry, with a glass of punch, and, it may be, a good slice or two of excellent hung beef or bacon. But now they approach town, and the stream thickens. There go the beggars, mendicants, and impostors, showing a degree of agility rather imprac-

ticable with their respective maladies, grievous and deplorable as they all, of course, are; and toiling vehemently after them, hops "Bill i' the Bowl," pitching himself along in a copper-fastened dish, with a small stool or *creepie* supporting each hand.

But now the whole sweep of the town and fair-green opens to us; tents, and standings, and tables, and roasting and boiling are all about us; for the *spoileen* fires are in operation, and many a fat sheep will be cut up, as well for, those who have never tasted mutton before, as for hundreds who eat rather from hunger than curiosity. Heavens! what an astounding multitude of discordant noises all blend into one hoarse, deep, drowsy body of sound, for which we can find no suitable term. Cows lowing, sheep bleating, pigs grunting, horses neighing, men shouting, women screaming, fiddlers playing, pipes squeeling, youngsters dancing, hammering up of standings and tents, thumping of restive or lazy animals, the show-man's drum, the lottery-man's speech, the ballad-singer's squall, all come upon us; and lastly, the unheeded sweep of the death-bell, as it tells with sullen tongue that some poor mortal has for ever departed from the cares and amusements, the trade and traffic, of this transitory life.

About twelve o'clock the fair-tide is full; for that is the time in which the greatest interchange of property, and the most vigorous transactions of business, with all accompanying bustle and activity, take place. For an hour or two this continues. About three o'clock the tide is evidently on the ebb; business begins to slacken, and those who

have their transactions brought to a close, meet their families and friends at the place of rendezvous—always a public-house. It is now, indeed, when the heat and burden of the day have passed, and refreshment becomes both grateful and necessary, that the people fall into distinct groups for the purpose of social enjoyment. If two young folk have been for some time “coortin’ one another,” the “bachelor,” which in Ireland means a suitor, generally contrives to bring his friends and those of his sweetheart together. The very fact of their accepting the “thrate,” on either side, or both, is a good omen, and considered tantamount to a mutual consent of their respective connexions. This, however, is not always so; for it often happens that a match is broken off after many a friendly computation has been held “upon the head of it,” which means upon that subject. Let the reader stand with us for a few minutes, and we will point out to him one or two groups who have met for the purpose of settling a marriage. Do you see that tall *sthrceil* of a fellow, who slings awkwardly along, for which reason he is nicknamed by his acquaintances “a sling-poke?” Observe the lazy grotesque repose of his three-featured face, for more it does not present, viz.—mouth, eyes, and nose. His long legs are without calves, and he is in-kneed; yet the fellow has such taste, that in order to show his shape he must needs wear breeches! Look at his coat, which was made for him about five years ago, when he was but “a slip of a boy.” The thin collar only reaches to the upper part of his shoulder; and as

he is what is called "crane-necked," of course the distance between his hat and the collar is incredible. The arms of the said coat are set so far in, that they appear almost to meet behind; but, on the other hand, two naked bones, each about six inches in length, project from the cuffs, which come not far below his elbows. The coat itself is what is called a jerkin; and as the buttons behind are half-way up his back, it is a matter of course that the tail, which runs rapidly to a point, is ludicrously scanty. Now, that youth, who is probably under no sense of gratitude to the graces, has put his "comedher" on the prettiest girl, with one or two exception, in the whole parish. The miserable pitchfork, the longitudinal rake—we speak now in a hay-making sense—has contrived to oust half a dozen of the handsomest and best-looking fellows in the parish. How he has done this is a mystery to his acquaintances; but it is none to us—we know him. The kraken has a tongue dripping with honey—one that would smoothe a newly-picked millstone. There they go, each of them laughing and cheerful, except himself; yet the fellow, though conscious of his own influence, enters the public-house as if he were going on the forlorn hope, or trailing his straggling limbs to confide his last wishes to the ear of the sheriff or hangman. He is, however, an Irishman at heart, though little indeed of the national bearing is visible in his deportment.

Here again comes a second group. Keep your eye on that good-humored, ruddy-faced young man, compact and vigorous, who is evidently the wag of

his party. Observe his tight-fitting, comfortable frize, neat brogues, and breeches, on the knees of which are two double knots of silk ribbon. See with what a smart, decisive air he wears his hat—"jauntily," as Leigh Hunt would say—upon one side of his head. That fellow has a high character for gallantry, and is allowed to be "the very sorrow among the girls"—"a Brinoge," "wid an eye that 'ud steal cold praties off a dresser." He is now leading in a girl, handsome no doubt, but who, nevertheless, does not possess sixpence, or sixpence worth for her portion. Not so the sword-fish we have pointed out to you a while ago, the tail of whose short coat lay as closely to him as that of a crab. The cassoway has secured a girl who, in point of wealth and dower, will be the making of him. However, you know the secret, Solomon says that a soft answer turneth away wrath; but what will not a soft question do, when put to a pretty girl, where there is no wrath?

Here comes another party, fewer in point of number than those we have shown you; a young man, a middle-aged woman, and her two daughters—one grown, the other only about fifteen. Who is—ah!—it is not necessary to inquire. Alley Bawn Murray! Gentle reader bow with heart felt respect to humble beauty and virtue! She is that widow's daughter, the pride of the parish, and the beloved of all who can appreciate goodness, affection, and filial piety. The child accompanying them is her sister, and that fine, manly, well-built, handsome youth is even now pledged to the modest and beau-

tiful girl. He is the son of a wealthy farmer, some time dead; but in purity, in truth, and an humble sense of religion, their hearts are each rich and each equal.

Alas ! alas ! that it should be so ! but we cannot control the inscrutable designs of Heaven. The spirit of our narrative must change, and our tale can henceforth breathe nothing but what is as mournful as it is true. There they pass into that public-house, true-hearted and attached; unconscious, too, poor things, of the almost present calamity that is soon to wither that noble boy and his beautiful betrothed. Their history, up to the period of their entering the public-house, is very brief and simple. Felix O'Donnell was the son of a farmer, as we have said, sufficiently extensive and industrious to be wealthy, without possessing any of the vulgar pride which rude independence frequently engrafs upon the ignorant and narrow-hearted. His family consisted of two sons and a daughter—Maura, the last-named, being the eldsst, and Felix by several years the junior of his brother Hugh. Between the two brothers there was in many things a marked contrast of character, whilst in others there might be said to exist a striking similarity. Hugh was a dark-brown, fiery man when opposed, though in general quiet and inoffensive. His passions blazed out with fury for a moment, and only for a moment; for no sooner had he been borne by their vehemence into the commission of an error, than he became quickly alive to the promptings of a heart naturally affectionate and kind. In money transac-



tions he had the character of being a hard man; yet were there many in the parish who could declare that they found him liberal and considerate. The truth was, that he estimated money at more than its just value, without absolutely giving up his heart to its influence. When a young man, though in good circumstances, he looked cautiously about him, less for the best or the handsomest wife than the largest dower. In the speculation, so far as it was pecuniary, he succeeded; but his domestic peace was overshadowed by the gloom of his own character, and not unfrequently disturbed by the violent temper of a wife who united herself to him with an indifferent heart. He was, in short, a man more respected than loved; one of whom it was often said, "well, well, he's a decent man, nabours—a little hard or so about money, but for all that there's worse. Sure we all have our failin's. There's one thing in him any how, that if he offends a man he's sorry for it: ay, an' when he *does* chance to do a good turn, sorra a word ever any one hears about it from his own lips. To be sure there's a great deal of the nager in him no doubt, an' in troth he didn't take afther his own father for that. Devil a dacent man than ould Felix O'Donnell ever broke bread."

His brother Felix, in all that was amiable and affectionate strongly resembled him; but there the resemblance terminated. Felix was subject to none of his gloomy moods or violent outbursts of temper. He was manly, liberal, and cheerful—valued money at its proper estimate, and frequently

declared, that in the choice of a wife he would never sacrifice his happiness to acquire it.

"I have enough of my own," he would say; "and when I meet the woman that my heart chooses, whether she has fortune or not, that's the girl that I will bring to share it, if she can love me."

Felix and his sister both resided together; for after his father's death he succeeded to the inheritance that had been designed for him. Maura O'Donnell was in that state of life in which we feel it extremely difficult to determine whether a female is hopeless or not upon the subject of marriage. Her humors had begun to ferment and to clear off into that thin vinegar serum which engenders the exquisite perception of human error, and the equally keen touch with which it is reproved. Time, in fact, had begun to crimp her face, and the vinegar to sparkle in her eye with that fiery gleam which is so easily lit up at five and thirty. Still she loved Felix, whose good-humor constituted him a butt for the irascible sallies of a temper more nearly allied to his brother Hugh's than his own. He was her younger brother, too, of whom she was justly proud; and she knew that Felix, in spite of the pungency of her frequent reproofs, loved her deeply, as was evident by the many instances of his considerate attention in bringing her home presents of dress, and in contributing, as far as lay in his power, to her comfort.

The world, indeed, is too much in the habit of drawing distorted inferences from the transient

feuds that occasionally appear in domestic life. It would be hard to find a family in which they do not sometimes occur; and when noticed by strangers, it is both uncharitable and unjust to conclude that there is an absence of domestic affection in the hearts of those who, after all, prove no more than that they are subject to the errors and passions of human nature, like their fellow creatures. No sister, for instance, ever loved another with stronger affection than poor Maura did her brother Felix, notwithstanding the repeated scoldings which, for very trivial causes, he experienced at her tongue. Woe, keen and scathing, be to those who dared, in her presence to utter an insinuation against him.

"If she abused him, she only did it for his good, and because she loved him; an' good right she had to love him, for a better brother never breathed the breath of life. Wasn't he a mere boy, only one-and-twenty years come next Lammas; and surely it stood to reason that he wanted sometimes to be checked and scolded too. He had neither father or mother to guide him, poor boy; and who would guide him, and advise him too, if his own sister wouldn't do it? Only one-and-twenty, and six feet in his shoes; but no *punhial*, no cabbage upon two pot-sticks, like some she knew, that were ready enough to give boy a harsh word when they ought to look nearer home, and—may-be—but *she* said nothing—as God forbid that she'd make or meddle with any neighbor's character; but *still*, may-be, they'd find enough to blame at home, if they'd open their eyes

to their own failings, as well as they do to the failings of their neighbors."

Another circumstance also strongly characteristic of the woman's heart, was evinced in the high and vigorous tone she assumed towards Hugh, whenever, in any of his dark moods, he happened to take Felix to task. These fierce encounters, however, never occurred in Felix's presence; for she thought that to take his part *then*, would remove, in a great degree, the 'vantage ground on which she stood with reference to himself. Difficult, indeed, was the part she found herself compelled to play on these delicate occasions. She could not, as a moralist and disciplinarian, proverbially strict, seem in any degree to countenance the charges brought by Hugh against Felix; nor, on the other hand, was it without a command of temper and heroic self-denial, rarely attained, that she was able to keep her indignation against Hugh pent up within decorous and plausible limits. During the remonstrance of the latter, she usually pushed the charges against Felix into the notorious failings of Hugh himself, and this she did in a tone of irony so dry and cutting, that Hugh was almost in every case, as willing to abandon the attack as he had been to begin it.

"Ay, indeed," she would proceed—"troth an conscience, Hugh, *avourneen*"—*avourneen* being pronounced with a civil bitterness that was perfectly withering—"throth an' conscience, Hugh, *avourneen*, it's truth you're speaking, and not only that, Hugh *darling*, but he's as dark as the ould *dioul* betimes, so he is, and runs into such fits of black-

ness and anger, for no reason—Hugh, *dheelish*, for no reason in life, man alive. Are you listening, Hugh? for it's to *you* I'm speaking, dear—for no reason in life, *acushla*, only because he's a dirty, black *bodagh*, that his whole soul and body's not worth the scrapings of a pot in a hard summer. Did you hear me, Hugh jewel? Felix, go out, avourneen, ye onbiddable creature, and look after them ditchers, and see that they don't play upon us to-day, as they did on Saturday."

Felix, who understood the sister's irony, went out on every such occasion with perfect good will, and indulged in an uncontrollable fit of laughter at her masked attack upon his brother.

No sooner was he gone than Hugh either fled at once, or gathered himself up against the vehement assault he knew she was about to make upon him.

"Why then, Hugh O'Donnell, ar'n't you a dirty, black *bodagh*, to go to open upon the poor boy for no reason in life? What did do that you should abuse him, you nager you? and it's well known that you're a nager, and that your heart's in the shillin'. Oh! it's long before you'd go to fair or market and bring home the best gown, or shawl, or mantle in it to the only sister you have, as *he* does. Ay, ar'n't you the cream of a dirty, black *bodagh*, for to go to attack the poor boy only for speaking to a dacent and a purty girl that hasn't a stain upon her name, or upon the name of one of her seed, breed, or generation, you miserly nager. I wouldn't say that before *him*, because I want to keep him under me; but where, I say, could you get so fine a young

slip as poor Felix is? My soul to the dev—God pardon me! I was going to say what I oughtn't to say: but I tell you, Hugh, that you must quit of it; he's the only brother we have, and it's the least we should be kind to him."

During this harangue poor Hugh's flush of passion usually departed from him. As we said, he loved his only brother; and so vivid were Maura's representations of his virtues, that Hugh, his passion having subsided, was usually borne away by the pathos with which she closed her observations respecting him. A burst of tears always concluded the dialogue on her part, and deep regret on the part of Hugh; for, in fact, the charges against Felix were such only as none except they themselves in the very exuberance of their affection, would think of bringing against him.

The reader is already acquainted with the allusion made by Maura to the "dacent and purty girl that hasn't a stain upon her name, or upon the name of one of her seed, breed, or generation." This "purty" girl is no other than Alley Bawn Murray; and although Maura, from a sheer spirit of contradiction, spoke of her to Hugh in a favorable point of view, yet nothing could be more obstinately bitter than her opposition to such a match on the part of Felix.

This, however, is human nature. To those who cannot understand such a character, we offer no apology—to the few who do, none is necessary.

The courtship of Alley Bawn and Felix had arrived, on the fair-day of Ballaghmore, to a crisis

which required decision on part of the wooer. They went in, as we have shown the reader, to a public-house. Their conversation, which was only such as takes place in a thousand similar instances, we do not mean to detail. It was tender and firm on the part of Felix, and affectionate between him and her. With that high pride, which is only another name for humility, she urged him to forget her, "if it was not plasins' to his friends. You know, Felix," she continued, "that I am poor and you are rich, an' I wouldn't wish to be dragged into a family that couldn't respect me."

"Alley dear," replied Felix, "I know that both Hugh and Maura love me in their hearts; and although they make a show of anger in the beginnin', yet they'll soon soften, and will love you as they do me."

"Well, Felix," replied Alley, "my mother and you are present; if my mother says I ought——"

"I do, darling," said her mother; "that is, I can't feel any *particular* objection to it. Yet somehow my mind is troubled. I know that what he says is what will happen; but, for all that—och, Felix, aroon, there's something over me about the same match—I don't know—I'm willin' an' I'm not willin'."

They arose to depart; and as both families lived in the beautiful village of Ballydhas, which we have already described to the reader, of course their walk home was such as lovers could wish.

Evening had arrived; the placid summer sun shone down with a mild flood of light upon Ballagh-

more and the surrounding country. There was nothing in the evening whose external phenomena could depress any human heart. The ocean lay like a mirror, on which the beams of the sun glistened in magnificent shafts, in whatsoever position you looked upon it. Not a wave or a ripple broke the expansive sheet, that stretched away till it melted into the dipping sky; yet to the *ear* its mysterious and deep murmurs were audible, and the lonely eternal sobbing of the awful sea, struck upon the heart of the superstitious mother with a sense of fear and calamity. Felix and Alley went before them, and the conversation which we are about to detail, took place between herself and her youngest daughter.

"Susy, darlin'," said she, "you see the happy pair before us; but why is it, *acushla*, that my heart is sunk when I think of their marriage? Do you hear that *say*? There's not a wave on it, but still it's angry, if one can judge by its voice. Darlin' it's *a bad sign*, for the same *say* isn't *always* so. Sometimes it is as asy as a sleepin' baby, and sometimes, although its waves are quiet enough, it looks like a murderer asleep. Now it breathes heavily avourneen, as if all was not right. Susy, darlin' I'm afeard, I say, that it's *a bad sign*."

"Mother dear," replied Susy, "what makes you speak that way? Sure it wouldn't be the little sup o' punch that Felix made you take that 'ud get into your head!"

"No, darlin'! Look at the pair before us; there they go, the pride, both o' them, God knows, of the



whole parish; but still when I think of the bitterness of Felix's friends, Susy, I can't help being afraid. His brother Hugh is a dark man, and his sister Maura is against it. God pity them! It's a cruel world, *acushla*, when people like them can't do as they'd wish to do. But, Susy, you're a child, and knows nothing at all about it."

Felix and Alley walked on, unconscious of the ominous forebodings which the superstition of the affectionate woman prompted her to utter. The arrangements for their marriage were on that night concluded, and the mother, after some feebly expressed misgivings, at which Felix and Alley laughed heartily, was induced to consent that on the third Sunday following they should be joined in wedlock. Had Felix been disposed to conceal his marriage from Hugh and Maura, at least until the eve of its occurrence, the publishing of their banns in the chapel would have, of course, disclosed it. When his sister heard that the arrangements were completed, she poured forth a torrent of abuse against what she considered the folly and simplicity of a mere boy, who allowed himself to be caught in the snares of an artful girl, with nothing but a handsome face to recommend her. Felix received all this with good humor, and replied only in a strain of jocularly to every thing she said.

Hugh, on the other hand, contented himself with a single observation. "Felix," said he, "I won't see you throw yourself away upon a girl that is no fit match for you. If you *can't* take care of your-

*self, I will.* Once for all, I tell you that *this marriage must not take place.*"

As he uttered these words his dark brows were bent, and his eyes flashed with a gleam of that ungovernable passion for which he was so remarkable. Felix, at all times peaceable, and always willing to acknowledge his elder brother's natural right to exercise a due degree of authority over him, felt that this was stretching it too far. Still he made no reply, nor indeed did Hugh allow him time to retort, had he been so disposed. They separated without more words, each resolved to accomplish his avowed purpose.

The opposition of Hugh and Maura to his marriage, only strengthened Felix's resolution to make his beloved and misrepresented Alley Bawn, the rightful mistress of his hearth, as she already was of his affections. Nay, his love burned for her with a purer and tenderer flame, when he looked upon the artless girl, and thought of the cruel hearts that would make her a martyr to a spirit so worldly-minded and selfish. Their deep-rooted prejudice against her poverty, he delicately concealed from her, together with the length to which their opposition had gone. As for himself, he acted precisely as if the approaching marriage had their full sanction; he saw Alley every day, became still more deeply enamored, and heard his sister's indignant remonstrances without uttering a single syllable in reply.

At length the happy Sunday morning arrived, and never did a more glorious sun light up the

beautiful valley of Ballydhas than that which shed down its smiling radiance from heaven upon their union. Felix's heart was full of that eager and trembling delight, which, where there is pure and disinterested love, always marks our emotions upon that blessed epoch in human life. Maura, contrary to her wont, was unusually silent during the whole morning; but Felix could perceive that she watched all his emotions with the eye of a lynx. When the hour of going to chapel approached, he deemed it time to dress, and, for that purpose, went to a large oaken tallboy that stood in the kitchen, in order to get out his clothes. It was locked, however, and his sister, told him at once, that the key, which was in her possession, should not pass into his hands that day. "No," she continued, "nor sorra the ring you'll put on the same girl with my consent. Aren't you a purty young omadhaun, you spiritless creature, to go to marry sich a *niddy nauddhy*, when you know that the best fortunes in the glen would jump at you! Yes, faiks! to bring home that mane, useless creature, that has'n't a penny to the good! A purty farmer's wife she'll make, and purtily she'll fill my poor mother's shoes, God be good to her! A poor, unsignified, smooth-faced thing, that never did a dacent day's work out of doors, barring to shake up a cock of hay, or pull the growing of a peck of flax! Oh! thin, mother darlin', that's in glory this day! but it's a purty head of a house he's puttin' afther you; and myself, too, must knock under to the like of her, and see her put up in authority over my head. Let me

alone, Felix; your laughing wont pass. The sorra kay you'll get from me to-day."

Felix, who was resolved to procure the key, saw that there was nothing for it but a little friendly violence. A good-humored struggle accordingly commenced between them—good-humored on his side, but bitter and determined on the part of Maura. Finding it difficult to secure the key, even by violence, Felix was about to give up the contest, and force the lock at once, when Hugh entered.

"What's all this?" he inquired. "What racket's this? Is it beating your sister you are? Is the young headstrong profligate beating you, Maura, eh?"

"No, Hugh, not that; but he wants the key to deck himself up for marrying that pet of his. God knows, I'd rather he *did* beat me than do what he's going to do."

"Felix," said his brother, "I'm over you in place of your father, and I tell you that it'll cost me a sore fall, or I'll put a stop to this day's work. A purty bridegroom you are, and a 'sponsible father of a family you'll make! By my sowl, it's a horse-whip I ought to take to you, and lash all thoughts of marriage out of you. What a hurry you are in to go a shoolin' (to become the rustic *chevalier d'industrie*.) You had betther provide yourself the bag and staff at once, for if you marry this portionless, good-for-nothing hussy——"

Felix's eye flashed, and, for the first time

in his life, he turned a fierce glance upon his brother.

"She's *no* hussy, Hugh; and if another man said it——" he paused, for it was but the 'hectic of a moment.'

"You'd knock him down, I suppose," said Hugh. "Why don't you speak it out? Why, Maura, he's *a man* on our hands, and I suppose he'll be a bully to-morrow, or next day, and put us all undher his feet, and make us all knuckle down to his poppet of a wife."

"Hugh," said Felix, "I am willin' to forget and forgive all the harshness ever you showed me, and to remimber nothing but your kindness, and you *was* kind to me; you're my brother—my only, and my eldest brother, and I beg it as a favor to one that loves you both, that you'll not interfere in my marriage this day."

"So far only," replied Hugh, "that I'll stop it for good an' all. You'll get no clothes out of this press to-day. In ten years or so you may be thinkin' of it. There's Madge M'Cawley, take her, with all my heart; a girl that has fifty pounds, five cows, and threescore sheep: ay, an' a staid sober girl. To be sure she's no beauty, an' not fit for 'gintlemen' that must have purty faces, and empty pockets. I say again, Felix, I'll put an end to this match."

This was too much for Felix's patience. After several unsuccessful remonstrances, and even supplications very humbly expressed, a fierce struggle ensued between the brothers, which was only ter-

minated by the interference of the two servant-men, who with some difficulty forced the elder out of the house, and brought him across the fields towards his own home. Maura then gave up the key, and the youthful bridegroom was soon dressed and prepared to meet his "man," and a few friends whom he had invited, at the chapel. His mind, however, was disturbed, and his heart sank at this ill-omened commencement of his wedding day.

"Maura," said he, when about to leave the house, "I'm heavy at heart for what has happened. Will you say that you forgive me, dear, before I go? and tell Hugh that I forgive him every thing, and that the last words I said before I went, wor—'that the blessin' of God may rest upon him and his,' and upon you too, Maura, dear."

These expressions are customary among Irish families when a marriage is about to take place; but upon this occasion they came spontaneously from a generous and feeling heart. Felix saw with sorrow that his brother and sister had not blessed him, and he resolved that his part of a duty so tender should not remain unperformed.

Maura, who suddenly averted her face when he addressed her, made no reply; but after he had departed from the threshold, her eyes followed him, and the tears slowly forced their way down her cheeks.

"It's no use," said she, "it's no use, I love him, I love my kind brother in spite of every thing. May God bless you Felix! may God bless you, and all you love! God forgive me for opposin' the boy as

I did ; and God forgive Hugh ! but he thinks it would be all for Felix's good to stop his marriage with Alley Bawn."

Felix, who heard neither his sister's blessing nor the expression of the affection she bore him, passed on with hasty steps through the fields. He had not gone far, however, when he saw his brother walking towards him; his arms folded, and his eyes almost hidden by his heavy brows ; sullen ferocity was in his looks, and his voice, as he addressed him, was hollow with suppressed rage :

"So," said he, "you will ruin yourself ! Go back home, Felix."

"For God's sake, Hugh, let me alone, let me pass."

"You will go ?" said the other.

"I will, Hugh."

"Then may bad luck go with you, if you do. I order you to stay at home, I say."

"Mind your own business, Hugh, and I'll mind mine," was the only reply given him.

Felix walked on by making a small circuit out of the direct path, for he was anxious not only to proceed quickly, as his time was limited, but above all things, to avoid a collision with his brother.

The characteristic fury of the latter shot out in a burst that resembled momentary madness as much as rage. "Is that my answer ?" he shouted, in the hoarse, quivering accents of passion; and with the rapid energy of the dark impulse which guided him, he snatched up a stone from a ditch, and flung it at his brother, whose back was towards him. Felix

fell forward in an instant, but betrayed after his fall no symptoms of motion—the stillness of apparent death was in every limb. Hugh, after the blow had been given, stood rooted to the earth, and looked as if the demon which possessed him had fled the moment the fearful act had been committed. His now bloodless lips quivered, his frame became relaxed, and the wild tremor of horrible apprehension shook him from limb to limb. Immediately a fearful cry was heard far over the fields, and the words—"Oh! yeah! yeah, yeah, Felix, my brother, agra, can't you spake to me?" struck upon the heart of Maura and the servant-men, with a feeling of dismay, deep and deadly.

"O God!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands and upturned eyes, "O God! my boy, my boy--Felix, Felix, what has happened to you?"

Again the agonized cry of the brother was heard loud and frantic.

"Oh, yeah, yeah, Felix, are you dead? brother, agra, can't you speak to me?"

With rapid steps they rushed to the spot; but, ah! what a scene was there to blast their sight and sear the brain of his sister, and indeed of all who could look upon it. The young bridegroom smote down when his foot was on the very threshold of happiness, and by the hand of a brother?

Hugh, in the mean time, had turned up Felix from the prone posture in which he lay, with a hope—a frenzied, a desperate hope of ascertaining whether or not life was extinct. In this position the stricken boy was lying, his brother, like a



maniac, standing over him, when Maura and the servants arrived. One glance, a shudder, then a long ghastly gaze at Hugh, and she sank down beside the insensible victim of his fury.

"What," said Hugh, wildly clenching his hands, "Mother of glory, have I killed both? Oh, Felix, Felix! you are happy, you are happy, agra, brother; but for me, oh, for me, *my* hour of mercy is past an' gone. I can never look to heaven more! How can I live," he muttered furiously to himself, "how can I live? and I darn't die. O God! O God! my brain's turnin'. I needn't pray to God to curse the hand that struck you dead, Felix dear, for I feel this minute that His curse is on me."

Felix was borne in, but no arm would Hugh suffer to encircle him but his own. Poor Maura recovered and although in a state of absolute distraction, yet she had presence of mind to remember that they ought to use every means in their power to restore the boy to life if it were possible. Water was got, with which his face was sprinkled; in a little time he breathed, opened his eyes, looked mournfully about him, and asked what had happened him. Never was pardon to the malefactor, nor the firm tread of land to the shipwrecked mariner, so welcome as the dawn of returning life in Felix was to his brother. The moment he saw the poor youth's eyes fixed upon him, and heard his voice, he threw himself on his knees at the bedside, clasped him in his arms, and with an impetuous tide of sensations, in which were blended joy, grief, burning affection, and remorse, he kissed his lips,

strained him to his bosom, and wept with such agony, that poor Felix was compelled to console him.

"Oh! Felix, Felix," exclaimed Hugh, "what was it I did to you? or how could the devil out of hell tempt me to—to—to—oh Felix agra, say you're not hurted—say only that you'll be as well as ever, an' I take God and every one present to witness, that from this minute till the day of my death, a harsh word 'll never crass my lips to you. Say you're not hurted, Felix dear! Don't you know, Felix, in spite of my dark-temper's putting me into a passion with you sometimes, that I always loved you?"

"Yes you did, Hugh," replied Felix, "an' I still knew you did. I didn't often contradict you, because I knew, too, that the passion would soon go off of you, and that you'd be kind to me again."

"Yeah, yeelish," said the other, while the scalding tears flowed profusely down his cheeks, and the deep sobs almost choked him. "Oh, yeah, yeelish! what *could* come over me! As judgment's before me, he was the best brother ever God created—you were, Felix darling—you were, you were!" He again pressed him to his heart, and kissed his lips with an overwhelming fulness of remorse and love.

"An' another thing, Felix dear—but first tell me are you gettin bettther?"

"I am," replied the youth, "my head is a little confused, but I have no pain."

Hugh raised his hands and streaming eyes to heaven

"Thanks, thanks, oh thanks an' praise be to God for that news! thanks an' praise be to you, blessed Father, for what he has said this minute, for it takes the weight, the dead crushin' weight that lay on my heart, off it. And now, Felix jewel, here, alanna, lay over your head upon my breast, an' I'll hould you anything I whisper into your own ear what 'll make you as stout as ever—keep away all of yees—the nerra one o' ye 'll hear it but himself. Sure, Felix dear," he continued, in a lower voice, "sure I'm willin' that you should marry your own Alley Bawn. An' listen, sure, I'll give her a portion myself—I'm able to do it an' I will too."

Felix, on hearing her name, looked around and endeavored, as appeared by his manner, to collect himself. He put his hand to his head for a moment and his eyes were without meaning. Hugh observed it, and felt his grief instantly checked by a fearful surmise as to a possible consequence of the blow which he had not contemplated.

"Felix dear," said he in a voice low, hollow, and full of terror, "what ails you? Is the pain coming back?"

Felix spoke not for about a minute, during which time he had become quite collected. Then with an affectionate look towards his brother, he replied—

"God bless you, Hugh, for the words you have said to me. Poor Alley? Hugh, God bless you! Would Maura consent? Will *you* consent, agra, to it, Maura dear?"

Maura, who had been all this time weeping, now advanced, and, smiling through her tears, embraced

him tenderly. "Yes, Felix, darling, an' I'm only heart-broken, that ever Hugh or myself refused to consent, or ever set ourselves against it."

The boy's eyes sparkled with a light more brilliant than had ever shone from them before: his whole face became animated, and the cloud of sorrow which had rested on his pale brow melted away before the effulgence of reviving hope. In a few minutes he arose and expressed his determination to proceed and keep his appointment. Hugh and Maura requested to accompany him, and the latter begged to be allowed the privilege to give the bride away.

"Maura," said Felix, "will you desire the servants to have a decent dinner prepared, and we'll eat it here. I intend, if you and Hugh will let me, to bring her home at once!"

"Och, God help the poor boy!" exclaimed Maura—"yes, darling, all that must be done."

When ready to depart, he again put his hand to his head—"It comes on here," said he, "for about a minute or so—this confusion—I think I'll tie a handkerchief about my head. It'll be an easy thing for me to make some excuse, or I can take it off at the chapel."

This was immediately acquiesced in; but at Hugh's suggestion a car was prepared, a horse yoked in a few minutes, and Felix, accompanied and supported by his brother and sister, set out for Mass. On arriving at the "green" he felt that his short journey had not been beneficial to him; on the contrary, he was worse, and very properly

declined to go into the heated atmosphere of the chapel. A message by his sister soon brought the blushing, trembling, serious, yet happy-looking girl to his side. Her neat white dress, put on with that natural taste which is generally accompanied by as clear sense of moral propriety, and her plain cottage bonnet, bought for the occasion, showed that she came prepared, not beyond, but to the utmost reach of her humble means. And this she did more for Felix's sake than her own, for she resolved that her appearance should not, if possible, jar upon the feelings of one who, she knew, in marrying her, had sacrificed prospects of wealth and worldly happiness for her sake. At sight of her, Felix smiled, but it was observed that his face, which had a moment before been pale, was instantly flushed, and his eye unusually bright. When he had kissed her, she replied to the friendly greetings of his brother and Maura with the most comely dignity, well suited to her situation and circumstances. Then turning to the elected husband of her heart, she said—

“Why thin, Felix, but it's little credit you do me this happy morning, coming with your night-cap on, as if you weren't well;” but as she saw the smile fade from his lips, and the color from his cheek, her heart sank, and “pallid as death's dedicated bride,” with her soft blue eyes bent upon his changing color and bandaged head, she exclaimed, “God be merciful to us! Felix dear, you are ill—you ate hurted! Felix, Felix darling, what ails you? What is wrong?”

"Don't be frightened, jewel," he replied, "don't darling—it won't signify—my foot slipped afther laving you last night on my way home, and my head came against a stone—it's only a little sore outside. It 'ill be very well as soon as the priest puts your heart and mine together—never to be parted—long—long an' airnestly have I wished an' prayed for this happy day. Isn't your mother here, jewel, an' my own little Ellen?"

Her eye had been fixed upon his countenance with all the love and anxiety of a young bride about to be united to the husband of her heart's first choice. She saw that despite of every effort to the contrary, there was in his mind a source of some secret sorrow. A single tear rolled down her cheek, which he kissed away, and as he did it, whispered her in a tone of affectionate confidence, that it was but a trifle and signified nothing. Maura took her hand, and assured her that no cause for apprehension existed; so did Hugh, but as he held her hand in his, he perceived that she got pale again, and trembled as if seized with some sudden fear.

When the ceremony was concluded, those who attended it of course returned to Felix's house to partake of the wedding-dinner. He, indeed, seemed to be gifted with new life; his eyes sparkled, and a deep carmine of his cheek was dazzling to look upon. Courtesy, and the usages prevalent on such occasions, compelled him to drink more than his state of health was just then capable of bearing; he did not, however, transgress the bounds of modera-

tion. Still the noise of many tongues, the sounds of laughter, and the din of mirth, joined to the consciousness that his happiness was now complete, affected him with the feverish contagion of the moment. He talked hurriedly and loud, and seemed to feel as if the accomplishment of his cherished hopes was too much for his heart to bear.

In the midst of all this jollity, a change which none observed came over him. His laugh became less frequent than his shudder or his sigh, and taking Alley aside, he begged she would walk with him to the beach.

"The say-breeze," said he, "and a sate upon the rocks—upon our thyme-bank, where we've often sat happily, Alley dear, will bring me to myself soon. I am tired, asthore machree, of all this noise and confusion. Come away, darling, we'll be happier with one another than with all these people about us."

His young bride accompanied him, and as they went, her happy heart beating under that arm to whose support she had now *a right*, her love the while calm and secure in its own deep purity, she saw before them, in bright perspective, many, many years of domestic affection and peace.

There they sat in the mellow sunset, until the soft twilight had gradually melted away the lengthened shadows of the rocks about them. Their hands were locked in each other, their hearts burned within them, and a tenderness which can be felt only by souls equally pure and innocent

touched their delighted converse into something that might be deemed beautiful and holy.

Artless, humble, and happy pair! Sit on and enjoy the only brief glimpse of this earth's heaven which you will ever get. It is the last time that heart will beat responsive to heart, and soul tremble to and mingle with soul between you.

Long before the hour of their return, Felix had felt much worse than during any preceding part of the day. The vivid and affectionate hopes of future happiness expressed by Alley added to his concern, and increased his tenderness towards her, especially when he contrasted his own physical sensations with the unsuspecting character of her opinion concerning his illness and the cause that produced it. 'Tis true he disguised all this as long as he could; but at length, notwithstanding his firmness, he was forced to acknowledge that pain overcame him. With the burning chill of fever bubbling through his blood—shivering yet scorching—he complained of the shooting pain in his head, and a strange confusion of mind, which the poor girl, from some of his incoherent expressions, had attributed to his excess of affection. With words of comfort she soothed him; *her* arm now returned the support she had received from his; she led him home, languid and half-delirious, whilst she herself felt stunned as well by the violence as by the unaccountable nature of his illness. On reaching home they found that the noise of social enjoyment had risen to the outrage of convivial extravagance; but the moment he staggered in, supported only by the



faithful arm of his wife, a solemn and apprehensive spirit suddenly hushed their intemperance, and awed them into a conviction that such an illness upon the marriage day must be as serious as it was uncommon. Felix was put to bed in pain and danger; but Alley smoothed his pillow, bound his head, and sat patient, and devoted, and wife-like, by his side. During all that woeful night of sorrow she watched the feverish start, the wild glare of the half-opened eye, the momentary conscious glance, and the miserable gathering together of the convulsed limbs, hoping that each pang would diminish in agony and that the morning might bring ease and comfort,

“ Poor girl, put on thy stifling widow’s weeds,  
And ’scape at once from Hope’s accursed bands !

We feel utterly incapable of describing, during the progress of this heavy night, the scorching and fiery anguish of his brother Hugh, or the distracted and wailing sorrow of poor Maura. The unexpected and delightful revulsion of feeling produced upon both, especially on the former, by his temporary recovery, now utterly incapacitated them from bearing his relapse with any thing like fortitude. The frantic remorse of the guilty man, and the stupid but pungent grief of his sister, appeared but as the symptoms of weak minds and strong passions, when contrasted with the deep but patient affliction of his innocent and uncomplaining wife. She wasted no words in sorrow; for during this hopeless night, self, happiness, affection, hope, were all forgotten in the absorbing efforts at his recovery.

Never, indeed, did the miseries and calamities of life draw from the fruitful source of a wife's attached and faithful heart, a nobler specimen of that pure and disinterested devotion which characterizes woman, than was exhibited by the stricken-hearted Alley Bawn.

There was something in this peculiar case, as, indeed there are in all family occurrences of a similar nature, which induced them to try upon the suffering boy the full extent of their humble skill, rather than call in a strange physician to witness the disastrous, perhaps fatal, effects of domestic violence. Had the cause of Felix's illness been unknown to Hugh or Maura, they would have procured medical advice in the early part of the night. Let us, however, not press too severely on the repentant brother. Shame, and remorse, and penitence, ought to plead strongly for "the hope deferred that made his heart sick." Hugh's passions arose to violence, but not to murder, a distinction which both law and morality too frequently forget to make.

When Hugh saw, however, that nothing except medical skill could save him, he forgot his crime and its consequences. Stung to madness by his love of Felix, and his fears for his recovery, he mounted a horse, and had almost broken down the animal by over-exertion, ere he reached the village of B——, where the doctor he sought lived. After an impetuous and violent knocking the door was opened, and a man pale and horror-struck entered, whom the doctor was inclined to receive rather as the patient than the messenger. Yes!

haggard, wild, yet weak and trembling, he staggered into the room, and, sinking on a seat, in a voice husky and hoarse said—

“Docthor! oh, docthor, you won’t refuse to come! It’s thrue he was my brother—but I had not—I had not—oh—no—no—I had it not in my heart to murdher him! My brother is dyin’. Oh, come, docthor! come to my brother, he’s dyin’, and ’twas I that struck the blow.”

With a vehemence of grief that was pitiable, and an exhibition of the wildest gestures which characterize despair, he then uttered a cry that rang through the house.

“Oh, Felix agra, my brother, I’m your murdherer! My sister and I are both wealthy—he’s dyin’ docthor—come, come. Oh, agra Felix—agra Felix! To see you well—to see you well—the wealth of the world, if I had it, would go. My life—my life—docthor! Oh, that would be but little—but it, too, would go—I’d give it—all we have, my sister and I, to our blanket—to the shoes on our feet, and the coat and gown on our backs—all—all—you’ll get—if you can save our brother, that I struck down and murdered!”

The doctor, a man of great skill and humanity, immediately ordered his horse, and mounting him, accompanied Hugh to the sick bed of his brother. On arriving there, they found him worse; and never before, nor during his whole professional experience, had the doctor witnessed such a scene. Hugh took his place behind Felix, who, by the doctor’s direction, was placed in a half-sitting, half-recumbent

posture in the bed; his arms were placed distractingly about him, his breast was his pillow, and his cheek, wildly and with oracious affection, laid to his. He was restrained from crying aloud, but his groans were enough to wrench the heart from which they proceeded to pieces. Sympathy, in fact, was transferred from the sick boy to his brother; and perhaps more tears were shed, by the lookers-on, from pity towards Hugh than Felix.

But where was she, the bride and wife of a changeful day—of a day, in which the extremities of happiness and misery met? Oh, where but where she should and ought to be, at his bed-side, hoping against hope, soothing his wild ravings by her soft sweet voice; and when, in his *delirium*, the happy scene of the past day seemed re-acted, then she knelt, ever ready to lead him, by her words and caresses, into a forgetfulness of his present pain. In his desperate struggles he fancied they were tearing her from him; and when the strength of several men could scarce restrain him, then came the mildness of her power. With her gentle hands and her fond kind words she laid him in peace once more, and, kneeling by his side, cooled his burning temples with her pale fingers, and wetted his parched lips with the draught prescribed by the physician. When the crisis, however, approached, she saw by the keen glance of observant affection, that the doctor's manner betrayed his hopelessness of her husband's recovery. Then did her strength give way, and one violent fit of hysteric sobbing almost broke down her reason

and physical powers. Unavailing was all their tenderness, and fruitless every attempt at consolation. Even her own beloved mother failed. "Alley, asthore agrue machree," said she, "don't give way to this, for it's sinful; it's wrong to cry so bitterly for the livin'. You know that while there's life there's hope. God is merciful, and may think fit to pity you, anien machree, and to spare him for the sake of our prayers, that your heart may'nt be broken. Here's the priest, too, an' sure it's a comfort, if the Lord *does* take him from us, that he's not goin' widout the holy sacraments of the Church, to clear away any stain of sin that may be on him."

Felix, tranquilized by the satisfaction that always results from the consciousness of having received the rites of the Church, yet moved by the deep sobbings of his miserable brother, took his hand, and thus addressed him—

"Hugh dear !"

"Oh, Felix, Felix, Felix darling, if you spake kind to me my brain will turn, and my heart will burst to pieces ! Harsh, harsh, avourneen, speak harshly, cruelly, blackly—oh, say you won't forgive me—but no, *that* I couldn't bear—forgive me in your heart, and before God, but don't spake wid affection to me, for then I'll not be able to bear it."

"Hugh," said Felix, from whose eyes the keenness of his brother's repentance wrung tears, despite his burning agony; "Hugh dear"—and he looked pitifully in the convulsed face of the unhappy man

—“Hugh dear, it was only an accident, for if you had—thought—that it would turn out—as it has done—— But no matter now—you have my forgiveness—and you deserve it; for Hugh dear, it was as much and more my own thoughtlessness and self-will that caused it. Hugh dear, comfort and support Alley here, and Maura, too, Hugh; be kind to them both for poor Felix’s sake.” He sank back, exhausted, holding his brother’s hand in his left, and his mute heart-broken bride’s in his right. A calm, or rather torpor, followed, which lasted until his awakening spirit, in returning consciousness of life and love, made a last effort to dissolve in a farewell embrace upon the pure bosom of his virgin wife.

“Alley,” said he, “are you not my wife, and amn’t I your husband? Whose hand should be upon me—in what arms but yours should I die? Alley, think of your own Felix—oh, don’t let me pass altogether out of your memory; an’ if you’d wear a lock of my hair, (many a time you used to curl it over on my cheek, for you used to say it was the same shade as your own, and you used to compare them together,) wear it, for my sake, next your heart, and if ever you think of doin’ a wrong thing, look at it, and you’ll remember that Felix, who’s now in the dust, always desired you to pray for the Almighty’s grace, an’ trust to Him for strength against evil. But where are you, asthore? My eyes want a last look of you; I feel you—ay, I feel you in my breakin’ heart, and sweet your presence in it, avourneen machree; but how is it that I can

not see you? Oh, my wife, my young wife, my spotless wife, be with me—near me!” He clasped her to his heart, as if while he held her there he thought it could not cease to beat; but in a moment, after one slight shudder, one closing pang, his grasp relaxed—his head fell upon her bosom—and he, Felix, who that morning stood up in the bloom of youth and manly beauty, with the cup of happiness touching his lips, was now a clod of the valley. Half unconscious—almost unbelieving that all could be over, she gently laid him down. On looking into his face, her pale lips quivered; and as her mute wild gaze became fixed upon the body, slowly the desolating truth forced itself upon her heart. She then sank upon her knees, and prayed to God that, if it were His will, and lawful for her in her misery to utter such a prayer, He would not part her in death from him who had been to her far dearer than all that life now contained—without whom the world was now empty to her for ever.

Quietly and calmly she then arose, and but for the settled wretchedness of her look, the stillness of her spirit might have been mistaken for apathy. Without resistance, without a tear, in the dry agony of burning grief, she gently gave herself up to the guidance of those who wept, while they attempted to soothe her. In reply to their attempts at consolation she only uttered one brief sentence in Irish. “Oh,” said she, “God is good—still, still, this was a *dark day* to Felix and to me!”

At the inquest which followed, there was no proof to criminate the wretched brother; nor, to speak truly, were the jury anxious to find any. The man's shrieking misery was more wild and frightful than death itself. From "the Dark Day" until this on which I write, he has never been able to raise his heart or his countenance. Home he never leaves, except when the pressure of business compels him; and when he does, in every instance he takes the most unfrequented paths and the loneliest by-roads, in order to avoid the face and eye of man. Better, indeed, to encounter flood or fire, than to suffer what he has borne, when the malicious or coarse-minded have reproached him, in what we trust, is his repentance, with his great affliction.

Alley, contrary to the earnest solicitations of Hugh and Maura, went back to reside with her mother. Four years have now passed, and the virgin widow is constant to her grief. With a bunch of yarn on her arm, she may be occasionally seen in the next market-town; the chastened sorrow of her look agreeing well with her mournful weeds. In vain is she pressed to mingle in the rustic amusements of her former companions; she cannot do it, even to please her mother; the poor girl's heart is sorrow-struck for ever. She will never smile again. As it is, however, the steady subdued melancholy of her manner increases the respect, without lessening the love, of all who know her. Who, indeed, could see her, and hear her sad history, without loving her purity, and her devoted



affection to the memory of him that was only the husband of a day, without pitying the stricken girl who suffered so much, and wishing that time which weans us from our greatest sorrows, may, by its influence, mellow her afflictions, until the bitterness of their spirit passes out of her soul.

Reader, if you want a moral, look upon the wasted brow of Hugh O'Donnell, and learn to restrain your passions and temper within its proper limits.



# THE DEAD BOXER.

BY

WILLIAM CARLETON,

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Peasantry," "Boddy the Rover," "Art Maguire," "Willy Reilly,"  
"Fardorougha, the Miser," "Paddy Go Easy,"  
"The Black Prophet," "Black Baronet," &c.

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# THE DEAD BOXER.

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## CHAPTER I.

ONE evening in the beginning of the eighteenth century—as nearly as we can conjecture the year might be that of 1720—some time about the end of April, a young man named *Lamh Laudher* O'Rorke, or Strong-handed O'Rorke, was proceeding from his father's house, with a stout oaken cudgel in his hand, towards an orchard that stood at the skirt of a county town, in a part of the kingdom which, for the present, shall be nameless. Though known by the epithet of *Lamh Laudher*, his christian name was John; but in those times Irish families of the same name were distinguished from each other by some indicative of their natural position, physical power, complexion, or figure. One, for instance, was called *Parra Ghastha*, or swift Paddy, from his fleetness of foot; another, *Shaun Buie*, or yellow Jack, from his bilious look; a third, *Micaul More*, or big Michael, from his uncommon size; and a fourth, *Sheemus Ruah*, or red James, from the color of his hair. These epithets, to be sure, still occur in Ireland, but far less frequently now than in the times of which we write, when Irish was almost

the vernacular language of the country. It was for a reason similar to those just alleged, that John O'Rorke was known as *Lamh Laudher* O'Rorke; he, as well as his forefathers for two or three generations, having been remarkable for prodigious bodily strength and courage. The evening was far advanced as O'Rorke bent his steps to the orchard. The pale, but cloudless sun hung over the western hills, and shed upon the quiet grey fields that kind of tranquil radiance which, in the opening of summer, causes many a silent impulse of delight to steal into the heart. Lamh Laudher felt this; his step was slow, like that of a man who, without being capable of tracing those sources of enjoyment which the spirit absorbs from the beauties of external nature, has yet enough of uneducated taste and feeling within him, to partake of the varied feast which she presents.

As he sauntered thus leisurely along he was met by a woman rather advanced in years, but still unusually stout and muscular, considering her age. She was habited in a red woollen peticoat that reached but a short distance below the knee, leaving visible two stout legs, from which dangled a pair of red garters that bound up her coarse blue hose. Her gown of blue worsted was pinned up, for it did not meet around her person, though it sat closely about her neck. Her grizzly red hair, turned up in front, was bound by a dowl cap without any border, a circumstance which, in addition to a red kerchief, tied over it, and streaming about nine inches down the back, gave to her *tout ensemble* a wild and strik-

ing expression. A short oaken staff, hooked under the hand, completed the description of her costume. Even on a first glance there appeared to be something repulsive in her features, which had evidently been much exposed to sun and storm. By a closer inspection one might detect upon their hard angular outline, a character of cruelty and intrepidity. Though her large cheek-bones stood widely asunder, yet her grey piercing eyes were very near each other; her nose was short and sadly disfigured by a scar that ran transversely across it, and her chin, though pointed, was also deficient in length. Altogether, her whole person had something peculiar and marked about it—so much so, indeed, that it was impossible to meet her without feeling she was a female of no ordinary character and habits.

Lamh Laudher had been, as we have said, advancing slowly along the craggy road which led towards the town, when she issued from an adjoining cabin and approached him. The moment he noticed her he stood still, as if to let her pass and uttered one single exclamation of chagrin and anger.

“*Ma shaughth milia mollach ort, a calliagh!* My seven thousand curses on you for an old hag,” said he, and having thus given vent to his indignation at her appearance, he began to retrace his steps as if unwilling to meet her.

“The son of your father needn’t lay the curse upon us so bitterly all out, Lamh Laudher!” she exclaimed, pacing at the same time with vigorous steps until she overtook him.

The young man looked at her maimed features, and as if struck by some sudden recollection, appeared to feel regret for the hasty malediction he had uttered against her. "Nell M'Collum," said he, "the word was rash; and the curse did not come from my heart. But, Nell, who is there that doesn't curse you when they meet you? Isn't it well known that to meet you is another name for falling in wid bad luck? For my part I'd go fifty miles about rather than cross you, if I was bent on any business that my heart 'ud be in, or that I cared any thing about."

"And who brought the bad look upon me first?" asked the woman. "Wasn't it the husband of the mother that bore you? Wasn't it *his* hand that disfigured me as you see, when I was widin a week of bein' dacently married? Your father, Lamh Laudher, was the man that blasted my name, and made it bitter upon tongue of them that mintions it."

"And that was because he wouldn't see one wid the blood of Lamh Laudher in his veins married to a woman that he had reason to think—I don't like to *say* it, Nelly—but you know it *is* said that there was darkness, and guilt, too, about the disappearin' of your child. You never cleared that up, but swore revenge night and day against my father, for only preventin' you from bein' the ruination of his cousin. Many a time, too, since that, has he asked you in my own hearin' what became of the boy."

The old woman stopped like one who had unexpectedly trod with bare foot upon something sharp

enough to pierce the flesh to the bone, and even to grate against it. There was a strong, nay, a fearful force of anguish visible in what she felt. Her brows were wildly depressed from their natural position, her face became pale, her eyes glared upon O'Rorke as if he had planted a poisoned arrow in her breast, she seized him by the arm with a hard pinching grip, and looked up for two or three minutes in his face, with an appearance of distraction. O'Rorke, who never feared man, shrunk from her touch, and shuddered under the influence of what had been, scarcely without an exception, called the "bad look." The crone held him tight, however, and there they stood, with their eyes fixed upon each other. From the gaze of intense anguish, the countenance of Nell McCollum began to change gradually to one of unmingled exultation; her brows were raised to their proper curves, her color returned, the eye corruscated with a rapid and quivering sense of delight, the muscles of the mouth played for a little, as if she strove to suppress a laugh. At length O'Rorke heard a low gurgling sound proceed from her chest; it increased; she pressed his arm more tightly, and in a loud burst of ferocious mirth, which she immediately subdued into a condensed shriek that breathed the very luxury of revenge, she said—

"*Lamh Laudher Oge*, listen—ax the father of you, when you see him, what has become of *his own child*—of the first that ever God sent him; an' listen again—when *he* tells *me* what has become of *mine*, *I'll* tell *him* what has become of *his*. Now go to



Ellen—but before you go, let me *cuggher* in your ear that I'll blast you both. I'll make the *Lamh Laudhers*, *Lamh Lhugs*. I'll make the strong arm the weak arm afore I've done wid 'em."

She struck the point of her stick against the pavement, until the iron ferrule with which it was bound dashed the fire from the stones, after which she passed on, muttering threats and imprecations as she left him.

O'Rorke stood and looked after her with sensations of fear and astonishment. The age was superstitious, and encouraged a belief in the influence of powers distinct from human agency. Every part of Ireland was filled at this time with characters, both male and female, precisely similar to old Nell M'Collum. The darkness in which this woman walked, according to the opinions of a people but slightly advanced in knowledge and civilization, has been but feebly described to the reader. To meet her was considered an omen of the most unhappy kind; a circumstance which occasioned the imprecation of *Lamh Laudher*. She was reported to have maintained an intercourse with the fairies, to be capable of communicating the blight of an evil eye, and to have carried on a traffic which is said to have been rather prevalent in Ireland at the time we speak of—namely, that of kidnapping. The speculations with reference to her object in perpetrating the crimes were strongly calculated to exhibit the degraded state of the people at that period. Some said that she disposed of the children to a certain class of persons in the me-

tropolis, who subsequently sent them to the colonies, when grown, at an enormous profit. Others maintained that she never carried them to Dublin at all, but insisted that, having been herself connected with the fairies, she possessed the power of erasing, by some secret charm, the influence of baptismal protection, and that she consequently acted as agent for the "gentry" to whom she transferred them. Even to this day it is the opinion in Ireland, that the "good people" themselves cannot take away a child, except through the instrumentality of some *mortal* residing with them, who has been baptized; and it is also believed that no baptism can secure children from them, except that in which the priest has been *desired* to baptize them with an especial view to their protection against fairy power.

Such was the character which this woman bore; whether unjustly or not, matters little. For the present it is sufficient to say, that after having passed on, leaving Lamh Laudher to proceed in the direction he had originally intended, she bent her steps towards the head inn of the town. Her presence here produced some cautious and timid mirth of which they took care she should not be cognizant. The servants greeted her with an outward show of cordiality, which the unhappy creature easily distinguished from the warm kindness evinced to vagrants whose history had not been connected with evil suspicion and mystery. She accordingly tempered her manner and deportment towards them with consummate skill. Her replies to their

inquiries for news were given with *an appearance* of good humor; but beneath the familiarity of her dialogue there lay an ambiguous meaning and a cutting sarcasm, both of which were tinged with a prophetic spirit, capable, from its equivocal drift of being applied to each individual whom she addressed. Owing to her unsettled life, and her habit of passing from place to place, she was well acquainted with local history. There lived scarcely a family within a very wide circle about her, of whom she did not know every thing that could possibly be known; a fact of which she judiciously availed herself by allusions in general conversations that were understood only by those whom they concerned. These mysterious hints, oracularly thrown out, gained her the reputation of knowing more than mere human agency could acquire, and of course she was openly conciliated and secretly hated.

Her conversation with the menials of the inn was very short and decisive.

"Sheemus," said she to the person who acted in the capacity of waiter, "where's Meehaul Neil?"

"Throth, Nell, dacent woman," replied the other, "myself can't exactly say that. I'll be bound he's on the *Esker*, looking afther the sheep, poor crathurs, durin' Andy Connor's illness in the small pock. Poor Andy's very ill, Nell, an' if God hasn't sed it, not expected; glory be to his name!"

"Is Andy ill?" inquired Nell; "and how long?"

"Bedad, going on ten days."

"Well," said the woman, "I knew *nothin'* about that; but I want to see Meehaul Neil, and I know he's in the house."

"Faix he's not, Nelly, an' you know I wouldn't tell *you* a lie about it."

"Did you get the linen that was stolen from your masther?" inquired Nell significantly, turning at the same time a piercing glance on the waiter; "an' tell me," she added, "how is Sally Lavery, and where is she?"

"It wasn't got," he replied, in a kind of stammer; "an' as to Sally, the nerra one o' me knows any thing about her, since she left this."

"Sheemus," replied Nell, "you know that Meehaul Neil *is* in the house; but I'll give you two choices, either to bring me to the speech of him, or else I'll give your masther the name of the thief that stole his linen; ay! the name of the thief that resaved it. I name nobody at present; an' for that matther, I know nothin'. Can't all the world tell you that Nell M'Cullum knows nothin'!"

"*Ghe dhevin*, Nelly," said the waiter, "maybe Meehaul *is* in the house unknownst to me. I'll try, any how, an' if he's to the fore, it won't be my fault or he'll see you."

"Nell, while the waiter went to inform Meehaul, took two ribbons out of her pocket, one white and the other black, both of which she folded into what would appear to a bystander to be a simple kind of knot. When the innkeeper's son and the waiter returned to the hall, the former asked her what the nature of her business with him might be. To this

she made no reply, except by uttering the word *husht!* and pulling the ends, first of the white ribbon, and afterwards of the black. The knot of the first slipped easily from the complication, but that of the black one, after gliding along from its respective ends, became hard and tight in the middle.

"*Tha sha marrho!* life passes and death stays," she exclaimed. "Andy Connor's dead, Meehaul Neil; an' you may tell your father that he must get some one else to look afther his sheep. Ay! he's dead!—But that's past. Meehaul, folly me; it's you I want, an' there's no time to be lost."

She passed out as she spoke, leaving the waiter in a state of wonder at the extent of her knowledge, and of the awful means by which, in his opinion, she must have acquired it.

Meehaul, without uttering a syllable, immediately walked after her. The pace at which she went was rapid and energetic, betokening a degree of agitation and interest on her part, for which he could not account. As she had no object in bringing him far from the house, she availed herself of the first retired spot that presented itself, in order to disclose the purport of her visit. "Meehaul Neil," said she, "we're now upon the Common, where no ear can hear what passes between us. I ax have you spirit to keep your sister Ellen from shame and sorrow?" The young man started, and became strongly excited at such a serious prelude to what she was about to utter.

"*Millia diououl!* woman, why do you talk about

shame or disgrace comin' upon any sister of mine ? What villain dare injure her that regards his life ? My sisther ! Ellen Neil ! No, no ! the man that 'ud only think of *that*, I'd give this right hand a dip to the wrist in the best blood of his heart."

"Ay, ay ! it's fine spakin' : but you don't know the hand you talk of. It's one that you had better avoid than meet. It's the *strong hand*, an' the dangerous one when vexed. You know *Lamh Laudher Oge* ?"

Meehaul started again, and the crone could perceive by his manner that the nature of the communication she was about to make had been already known to him, though not, she was confident, in so dark and diabolical a shape as that in which she determined to put it.

"*Lamh Laudher Oge* !" he exclaimed ; "surely you don't mane to say that he has any bad design upon Ellen ! It's not long since I gave him a caution to drop her, an' to look out for a girl fittin' for his station. Ellen herself knows what he'll get, if we ever catch him spakin' to her again. The day will never come that *his* faction and *ours* can be friends."

"You did do that, Meehaul," replied Nell, "an' I know it ; but what 'ud you think if he was so cut to the heart by your turnin' round upon his poverty, that he swore an oath to them that I could name, bindin' himself to bring your sister to a state of shame in order to punish you for your words ? That 'ud be great glory over a faction that they hate."

"Tut, woman, he daren't swear such an oath; or if he swore it fifty times over on his bare knees, he'd ate the stones off o' the pavement afore he'd dare to act upon it. In the first place, I'd prepare him for his coffin, if he did; an', in the next, do you think so manely of Ellen, as to believe that she would bring disgrace an' sorrow upon herself and her family? No, no, Nell; the old *diouls* in you, or you're beside yourself, to think of such a story. I've warned her against him, and so did we all; an' I'm sartin' this minute, that she'd not go a single foot to change words with him, unknownst to her friends."

The old woman's face changed from the expression of anxiety and importance that it bore, to one of coarse glee, under which, to those who had penetration sufficient to detect it, lurked a spirit of hardened and reckless ferocity.

"Well, well," she replied, "sure I'm proud to hear what you tell me. How is poor Nanse M'Col-lum doin' wid yez? for I hadn't time to see her a while agone. I hope *she'll* never be ashamed or afraid of her aunt, any how. I may say, I'm all that's left to the good of her name, poor *girshah*."

"What 'ud ail her?" replied Meehaul; "as long as she's honest an' behaves herself, there's no fear of her. Had you nothin' else to say to me, Nell?"

The same tumultuous expression of glee and malignity again lit up the features of the old woman, as she looked at him, and replied, with something like contemptuous hesitation, "Why, I don't know that. If you had more sharpness or sinse I might

say—Meehaul Neil,” she added, elevating her voice, “what do you think I *could* say, this sacred minnit! Your sister! Why she’s a good girl!—true enough that: but how long she *may* be so’s another affair. Afeard! Be the ground we stand on, man dear, if you an’ all belongin’ to you, had eyes in your heads for every day in the year, you couldn’t keep her from young Lamh Laudher. Did you hear any thing?”

“I’d not believe a word of it,” said Meehaul calmly, and he turned to depart.

“I tell you it’s as true as the sun to the dial,” replied Nell; “and I tell you more, he’s wid her this minnit behind your father’s orchard! Ay! an’ if you wish you may see them together wid your own eyes, an’ sure if you don’t b’lieve *me*, you’ll b’lieve *them*. But, Meehaul, take care of him; for he has his fire-arms; if you meet him don’t go empty-handed, and I’d advise you to have the *first shot*.”

“Behind the orchard,” said Meehaul, astonished; “where there?”

“Ay, behind the orchard, where they often war afore. Where there? Why, if you want to know that, sittin’ on one of the ledges in the Grassy Quarry. That’s their sate whenever they meet; an’ a snug one it is for them that don’t like their neighbor’s eyes to be upon them. Go now an’ satisfy yourself, but watch them at a distance, an’, as you expect to save your sister, don’t breathe the name of Nell M’Collum to a livin’ mortal.”

Meehaul Neil’s cheek flushed with deep resent-



ment on hearing this disagreeable intelligence. For upwards of a century before there had subsisted a deadly feud between the Neils and Lamh Laudhers, without either party being able exactly to discover the original fact from which their enmity proceeded. This, however, in Ireland, makes little difference. It is quite sufficient to know that they meet and fight upon every possible opportunity, as hostile factions ought to do, without troubling themselves about the idle nonsense of inquiring why they hate and maltreat each other. For this reason alone, Meehaul Neil was bitterly opposed to the most distant notion of a marriage between his sister and young Lamh Laudher. There were other motives also which weighed, with nearly equal force, in the consideration of this subject. His sister Ellen was by far the most beautiful girl of her station in the whole country, and many offers, highly advantageous, and far above what she otherwise could have expected, had been made to her. On the other hand, Lamh Laudher Oge was poor, and by no means qualified in point of worldly circumstances to propose for her, even were hereditary enmity out of the question. All things considered, the brother and friends of Ellen would rather have seen her laid in her grave, than allied to a comparatively poor young man, and their bitterest enemy. Meehaul had but little doubt as to the truth of what Nell M'Collum told him. There was a saucy and malignant confidence in her manner, which, although it impressed him with a sense of her earnestness, left, nevertheless, an indefinite feeling of

dislike against her on his mind. He knew that her motive for disclosure was not one of kindness or regard for him or for his family. Nell M'Collum had often declared that "the wide earth did not carry a bein' she liked or loved, but *one*—not even excepting herself, that she hated most of all." This however was not necessary to prove that she acted rather from the gratification of some secret malice, than from the principle of benevolence. The venomous leer of her eye, therefore, and an accurate knowledge of her character, induced him to connect some apprehension of approaching evil with the unpleasant information she had just given him.

"Well," said Meehaul, "if what you say is true, I'll make it a black business to Lamh Laudher. I'll go directly and keep my eye on them; an' I'll have *my* fire-arms, Nell; an' by the life that's in me, he'll taste them if he provokes me; an' Ellen knows *that*." Having thus spoken he left her.

The old woman stood and looked after him with a fiendish complacency.

"A black business, will you?" she exclaimed, repeating his words in a soliloquy;—"do so—an' may all that's black assist you in it! Dher Chier-nah, I'll do it or lose a fall—I'll make the Lamh Laudhers the Lamh Lhugs afore I've done wid 'em. I've put a thorn in their side this many a year, that'll never come out; I'll now put one in their *marrow*, an' let them see how they'll bear *that*. I've left *one* empty chair at their hearth, an' it 'ill go hard wid me but I'll lave another.

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## CHAPTER II.

IN the mean time young Lamh Laudher felt little suspicion that the stolen interview between him and Ellen Neil was known. The incident, however, which occurred to him on his way to keep the assignation, produced in his mind a vague apprehension which he could not shake off. To meet a red-haired woman, when going on any business of importance, was considered at all times a bad omen, as it is in the country parts of Ireland unto this day; but to meet a female familiar with forbidden powers, as Nell M'Collum was supposed to be, never failed to produce fear and misgiving in those who met her. Mere physical courage was no bar against the influence of such superstitions; many a man was a slave to them who never knew fear of a human or tangible enemy. They constituted an important part of the popular belief! for the history of ghosts and fairies, and omens, was, in general, the only kind of lore in which the people were educated; thanks to the sapient traditions of their forefathers.

When Nell passed away from Lamh Laudher, who would fain have flattered himself that by turning back on the way, until she passed him, he had avoided meeting her, he once more sought the place of appointment, at the same slow pace as before. On arriving behind the orchard, he found, as the

progress of the evening told him that he had anticipated the hour at which it had been agreed to meet. He accordingly descended the Grassy Quarry, and sat on a mossy ledge of rock, over which the brow of a little precipice jutted in such a manner as to render those who sat beneath, visible only from a particular point. Here he had scarcely seated himself when the tread of a foot was heard, and in a few minutes Nanse M'Collum stood beside him.

"Why, thin, bad cess to you, Lamh Laudher," she exclaimed, "but it's a purty chase I had afther you."

"Afther me, Nanse? and what's the commission, *cush gastha* (lightfoot)?"

"The sorra any thing, at all, at all, only to see if you war here. Miss Ellen sent me to tell you that she's afeard she can't come this evenin', unknownst to them."

"An' am I not to wait, Nanse?"

"Why, she says she *will* come, for all that, if *she can*; but she bid me take your stick from you, for a rason she has, that she'll tell yourself when she sees you."

"Take my stick! Why Nanse, *ma colleen bawn*, what can *she* want with *my* stick? Is the darlin' girl goin' to bate any-body?"

"Bad cess to the know *I* know; Lamh Laudher, barrin' it be to lay on yourself for staln' her heart from her. Why thin, the month's mether o' honey to you, soon an' sudden, how did you come round her at all?"

"No matter about that, Nanse; but the family's bitter against me?—eh?"

"Oh, thin, in trogs, it's ill their common to hate you as they do; but thin, you see, this faction-work will keep yees asundher for ever. Now gi' me your stick, an' wait, any way, till you see whether she comes or not."

"Is it by Ellen's ordhers you take it, Nanse?"

"To be sure—who else's? but the divil a one o' me knows what she means by it, any how—only that *I* daren't go back widout it."

"Take it, Nanse; she knows I wouldn't refuse her my heart's blood, let alone a bit of a kippeen."

"A bit of a kippeen! Faix, this is a quare kippeen! Why, it would fell a bullock."

"When you see her, Nanse, tell her to make haste, an' for God's sake not to disappoint me. I can't rest well the day I don't meet her."

"Maybe other people's as bad, for that matter; so good night, an' the methers o' honey to you, soon an' sudden! Faix, if any body stand in my way now, they'll feel the weight of this, any how."

After uttering the last words, she brandished the cudgel and disappeared.

Lamh Laudher felt considerably puzzled to know what object Ellen could have had in sending the servant maid for his staff. Of one thing, however, he was certain, that her motive must have had regard to his own safety; but how, or in what manner, he could not conjecture. It is certainly true some misgivings shot lightly across his imagination,

on reflecting that he had parted with the very weapon which he usually brought with him to repel the violence of Ellen's friends, should he be detected in an interview with her. He remembered, too, that he had met unlucky Nell M'Collum, and that the person who deprived him of his principal means of defence was her niece. He had little time, however, to think upon the subject, for in a few minutes after Nanse's departure, he recognised the light quick step of her whom he expected.

The figure of Ellen Neil was tall, and her motions full of untaught elegance and natural grace. Her countenance was a fine oval; her features, though not strictly symmetrical, were replete with animation, and her eyes sparkled with a brilliancy indicative of a warm heart and a quick apprehension. Flaxen hair, long and luxuriant, decided, even at a distant glance, the loveliness of her skin, than which the unsunned snow could not be whiter. If you add to this a delightful temper, buoyant spirits, and extreme candor, her character, in its strongest points, is before you.

On reaching the bottom of the Grassy Quarry, as it was called, she peered under the little beetling cliff that overhung the well-known ledge on which Lamh Laudher sat.

"I declare, John," said she, on seeing him, "I thought at first you weren't here."

"Did you ever know me to be late!" said John, taking her by the hand, and placing her beside him; "and what would you a' done, Ellen, if I hadn't been here?"

"Why, run home as if the life was lavin' me, for fear of seein' something."

"You needn't be afeard, Ellen, dear; nothing could harm you, at all events. However, puttin' that aside, have you any betther tidins than you had when we met last?"

"I wish to heaven I had, John! but indeed I have far worse; ay, a thousand times worse. They have all joined against me, an' I'm not to see or speak to you at all."

"That's hard," replied Lamh Laudher, drawing his breath tightly; "but I know where it comes from. I think your father might be softened a little, ay, a great deal, if it wasn't for your brother Meehaul."

"Indeed, Lamh Laudher, you're wrong in that; my father's as bittther against you as he is. It was only on Tuesday evenin' last that they told me, one an' all they would rather see me a corpse than your wife. Indeed an' deed, John, I doubt it never can be."

"There," replied John, "I see plain enought that they'll gain you over at last. That will be the end of it: but if you choose to break the vows and promises that passed between us, you may do so."

"Oh! Lamh Laudher," said Ellen, affected at the imputation contained in his last observation; "don't *you* treat me with such suspicion. I suffer enough for your sake, as it is. For nearly two years, a day has hardly passed that my family hasn't wrung the burnin' tears from my eyes on your account.



Haven't I refused matches that any young woman in my station of life ought to be proud to accept?"

"You did, Ellen, you did; but still I know how hard it is for you to hould out against the persecution you suffer at home. No, no, Ellen dear, I never doubted you for one minute. All I wondher at is, that such a girl as you ever could think of one so humble as I am, compared to what you'd ave a right to expect an' could get."

"Well, but if I'm willin' to prefer you, John?" said Ellen, with a smile.

"One thing I know, Ellen," he replied, "an' that is, that I'm far from bein' worthy of you; an' I ought, if I had a high enough spirit, to try to turn you against me, if it was only that you might marry a man that 'ud have it in his power to make you happier than ever I'll be able to do; any way, than ever *it's likely* I'll be able to do."

"I don't think, John, that ever money or the wealth of the world made a man an' wife love one another yet, if they didn't do it before; but it has often put their hearts against one another."

"I agree wid you in that, Ellen; but you don't know how my heart sinks when I think of your an' my own poverty. My poor father, since the strange disappearance of little Alice, never was able to raise his head; and indeed my mother was worse. If the child had died, an' that we knew she slept with ourselves, it would be a comfort. But not to know what became of her—whether she was drowned or kidnapped—that was what crushed their hearts. I must say that since *I* grew up

we're improvin'; an' I hope, God willin', now that my father laves the management of the farm to myself, we'll still improve more an' more. I hope it for their sakes, but more, if possible, for yours. I don't know what I wouldn't do to make you happy, Ellen. If my life could do it, I think I could lay it down to show the love I bear you. I could take to the highway and rob for your sake, if I thought it would bring me means to make you happy."

Ellen was touched by his sincerity, as well as by the tone of manly sorrow with which he spoke. His last words, however, startled her, when she considered the vehement manner in which he uttered them.

"John," said she, alarmed, "never, while you have life, let me hear a word of that kind out of your lips. No—never, for the sake of heaven above us, breathe it, or think of it. But, I'll tell you something, an' you must hear it, an' bear it too, with patience."

"What is it, Ellen! If it's fair an' manly, I'll be guided by your advice."

"Meehaul has threatened to—to—I mane to say, that you musn't have any quarrel with him, if he meets you or provokes you. Will you promise this?"

"Meehaul has threatened to strike me, has he? An' I, a *Lamh Laudher*, am to take a blow from a Neil, an' to thank him, I suppose, for givin' it."

Ellen rose up and stood before him.

"*Lamh Laudher*," said she, "I must now try

your love for me in earnest. A lie I cannot tell no more than I can cover the truth. My brother *has* threatened to strike you, an' as I said afore, you must bear it for his sister's sake."

"No, *dher Chiernah*, never. That, Ellen, is goin' beyant what I'm able to bear. Ask me to cut off my right hand for your sake, an' I'll do it; ask my life, an' I'll give it: but to ask a Lamh Laudher to bear a blow from a Neil—never. What! how could I rise my face afther such a disgrace? How could I keep the country wid a Neil's blow, like the stamp of a thief upon my forehead, an' me the first of *my own* faction, as your brother is of *his*. No—never!"

"An' you say you love me, John?"

"Betther than ever man loved woman."

"No, man—you don't," she replied; "if you did, you'd give up *something* for me. You'd bear *that* for my sake, an' not think it much. I'm beginnin' to believe, Lamh Laudher, that if I was a poor portionless girl, it wouldn't be hard to put me ont of your thoughts. If it was only for my own sake you loved me, you'd not refuse me the first request I ever made to you; when you know, too, that if I didn't think more of you than I ought, I'd never make it."

"Ellen, would you disgrace me? Would you wish me to bear the name of a coward? Would you want my father to turn me out of the house? Would you want my own faction to put their feet upon me, an' drive me from among them?"

"John," she replied, bursting into tears, "I *do*

know that it's a sore obligation to lay upon you, when every thing's taken into account; but if you wouldn't do this for me, who would you do it for? Before heaven, John, I dread a meetin' between you an' my brother, afther what *he* tould me; an' the only way of preventin' danger is for you not to strike him. Oh, little you know what I have suffered these two days for *both* your sakes! *Lamh Laudher Oge*, I doubt it would be well for me if I had never seen your face."

"Any thing undher heaven but what you want me to do, Ellen."

"Oh! don't refuse me this, John. I ask it, as I said, for *both* your sakes, an' for my own sake. Meehaul wouldn't strike an unresistin' man. I won't lave you till you promise; an' if that won't do, I'll go down on my knees an' ask you for the sake of heaven above, to be guided by me in this."

"Ellen, I'll lave the country to avoid him, if that'll plase you."

"No—no—no, John: that doesn't plase me. Is it to lave your father an' family, an' you the staff of their support? Oh, John, give me your promise. Here on my two knees I ask it from you, for my own, for your own, and for the sake of God above us! I know Meehaul. If he got a blow from you on my account, he'd never forgive it to either you or me."

She joined her hands in supplication to him as she knelt, and the tears chased each other like rain down her cheeks. The solemnity with which she

insisted on gaining her point staggered Lamh Laudher not a little.

"There must be something undher this," he replied, "that makes you set your heart on it so much. Ellen, tell me the truth; what is it?"

"If I loved you less, John, an' my brother too, I wouldn't care so much about it. Remember that I'm a woman, an' on my knees before you. A blow from you would make him take your life or mine, sooner than that I should become your wife. You ought to know his temper."

"You know, Ellen, I can't at heart refuse you any thing. I will not strike your brother."

"You promise, before God, that no provocation will make you strike him."

"That's hard, Ellen; but—well, I do; before God, I won't—an' it's for *your* sake I say it. Now, get up, dear, get up. You have got me to do what no mortal livin' could bring me to but yourself. I suppose that's what made you send Nanse M'Collum for my staff?"

"Nancy M'Collum! When?"

"Why, a while ago. She tould me a quare enough story, or rather no story at all, only that you couldn't come, an' you could come, an' I was to give up my staff to her by your ordhers."

"She tould you false, John. I know nothing about what you say."

"Well, Ellen," replied Lamh Laudher, with a firm seriousness of manner, "you have brought me into danger. I doubt, without knowin' it. Fer *my own part*, I don't care so much. Her unlucky

awnt met me comin' here this evenin', and threatened both our family and yours. I know she would sink us into the earth if she could. Either she or your brother is at the bottom of this business, whatever it is. Your brother I don't fear; but *she* is to be dreaded, if all's true that's said about her."

"No, John—she surely couldn't have the heart to harm you an' me. Oh, but I'm light now, since you did what I wanted you. No harm can come between you and Meehaul; for I often heard him say, when speakin' about his faction fights, that no one but a coward would strike an unresistin' man. Now come and see me past the Pedlar's Cairn, an' remember that you'll thank me for what I made you do this night. Come quickly—I'll be missed."

They then passed on by a circuitous and retired path that led round the orchard, until he had conducted her in safety beyond the Pedlar's Cairn, which was so called from a heap of stones that had been loosely piled together, to mark the spot as the scene of a murder, whose history, thus perpetuated by the custom of every passenger casting a stone upon the place, constituted one of the local traditions of the neighborhood.

After a tender good-night, given in a truly poetical manner under the breaking light of a May moon, he found it necessary to retrace his steps by a path which wound round the orchard, and terminated in the public entrance to the town. Along this suburban street he had advanced but a short way, when he found himself overtaken and arrest-

ed by his bitter and determined foe, Meehaul Neil. The connection betwixt the promise that Ellen had extorted from him and this rencounter with her brother flashed upon him forcibly: he resolved, however, to be guided by her wishes, and with this purpose on his part, the following dialogue took place between the heads of the rival factions. When we say, however, that Lamh Laudher was the head of his party, we beg to be understood as alluding only to his personal courage and prowess; for there were in it men of far greater wealth and of higher respectability, so far as mere wealth could confer the latter.

"Lamh Laudher," said Meehaul, "whenever a Neil spakes to you, you may know it's not in friendship."

"I know that, Meehaul Neil, without hearin' it from you. Spake, what have you to say?"

"There was a time," observed the other, "when you and I were enemies only because our *cleaveens* were enemies; but now there is, an' you know it, a blacker hatred between us."

"I would rather there was not, Meehaul; for my own part, I have no ill-will against either you or yours, an' *you know* that; so when you talk of hatred, spake only for yourself."

"Don't be mane, man," said Neil; "don't make them that hates you despise you into the bargain."

Lamh Laudher turned towards him fiercely, and his eye gleamed with passion; but he immediately recollected himself, and simply said—

"What is your business with me this night, Meehaul Neil?"

"You'll know that soon enough—sooner, maybe, than you wish. I now ask you to tell me, if you are an honest man, where you have been?"

"I am as honest, Meehaul, as any man that ever carried the name of Neil upon him, an' yet I won't tell you that, till you show me what right you have to ask me."

"I b'lieve you forget, that I'm Ellen Neil's brother: now, Lamh Laudher, *as* her brother, I choose to insist on your answering me."

"Is it by *her* wish?"

"Suppose I say it is."

"Ay! but I won't suppose that, till you lay your right hand on your heart, and declare as an honest man, that—tut, man—this is nonsense. Meehaul, go home—I would rather there was friendship between us."

"You were with Ellen this night in the Grassy Quarry."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I saw you both—I watched you both; you left her beyond the Pedlar's Cairn, an' you're now on our way home."

"An' the more mane you, Meehaul, to become a spy upon a girl that you know is as pure as the light from heaven. You ought to blush for doubtin' sich a sister, or thinkin' it your duty to watch her as you do."

"Lamh Laudher, you say that you d rather there was no ill-will between us."



"I say that, God knows, from my heart out."

"Then there's one way that it may be so. Give up Ellen; you'll find it for your own interest to do so."

"Show me that, Meehaul."

"Give her up, I say, an' then I may tell you."

"Meehaul, good night. Go home."

They had now entered the principal street of the town, and as they proceeded in what appeared to be an earnest, perhaps a friendly conversation, many of their respective acquaintances, who lounged in the moonlight about their doors, were not a little surprised at seeing them in close conference. When Lamh Laudher wished him good night, he had reached an off street which led towards his father's house, a circumstance at which he rejoiced, as it would have been the means, he hoped, of terminating a dialogue that was irksome to both parties. He found himself, however, rather unexpectedly and rudely arrested by his companion.

"We can't part, Lamh Laudher," said Meehaul, seizing him by the collar, "till this business is settled—I mane till you promise to give my sister up."

"Then we must stand here, Meehaul, as long as we live—an' I surely won't do that."

"You *must* give her up, man."

"Must! Is it must from a Neil to a Lamh Laudher? You forgot yourself, Meehaul: you are rich *now*, an' I'm poor *now*; but any old friend can tell you the differ between your grandfather an' mine. Must, indeed!"

"Ay; must is the word, I say; ar' I tell you that from this spot you won't go till you swear it, or this stick—an' its a good one—will bring you to submission."

"I have no stick, an' I suppose I may thank you for that."

"What do you mane?" said Neil; "but no matter—I don't want it. There—to the devil with it;" and as he spoke he threw it over the roof of the adjoining house.

"Now give up my sister or take the consequence."

"Meehaul, go home, I say. You know I don't fear any single man that ever breathed; but, above all men on this earth, I wish to avoid a quarrel with *you*. Do you think, in the mean time, that even if I didn't care a straw for your sister, I could be mane enough to let myself be bullied out of her by you, or any of your faction? Never, Meehaul; so spare your breath, an' go home."

Several common acquaintances had collected about them, who certainly listened to this angry dialogue between the two faction leaders with great interest. Both were powerful men, young, strong, and muscular. Meehaul, of the two, was taller, his height being above six feet, his strength, courage, and activity, unquestionably very great. Lamh Landher, however, was as fine a model of physical strength, just proportion, and manly beauty as ever was created; his arms, in particular, were of terrific strength, a physical advantage so peculiar to his family as to occasion the epithet by which it was known. He had scarcely uttered the reply we have

written, when Meehaul, with his whole strength, aimed a blow at his stomach, which the other so far turned aside, as to bring it higher up on his chest. He staggered back, after receiving it, about seven or eight yards, but did not fall. His eye literally blazed, and for a moment he seemed disposed to act under the strong impulse of self-defence. The solemnity of his promise to Ellen, however, recurred to him in time to restrain his uplifted arm. By a strong and sudden effort he endeavored to compose himself, and succeeded. He approached Meehaul, and with as much calmness as he could assume, said—

“Meehaul, I stand before you, an’ you may strike, but I won’t return your blows: I have reasons for it, but I tell you the truth.”

“You won’t fight?” said Meehaul, with mingled rage and scorn.

“No,” replied the other, “I won’t fight *you*.”

A murmur of “shame” and “coward” was heard from those who had been drawn together by their quarrel.

“*Dher ma chorp*,” they exclaimed with astonishment, “but Lamh Laudher’s afeard of him!—the *garran bane’s* in him, now that he finds he has met his match.”

“Why, hard fortune to you, Lamh Laudher, will you take a blow from a Neil? Are you goin’ to disgrace your name?”

“I won’t fight him,” replied he to whom they spoke, and the uncertainty of his manner was taken for want of courage.

"Then," said Meehaul, "here, before witnesses, I give you the *coward*, that you may carry the name to the last hour of your life."

He inflicted, when uttering the words, a blow with his open hand on Lamh Laudher's cheek, after which he desired the spectators to bear witness to what he had done. The whole crowd was mute with astonishment, not a murmur more was heard; but they looked upon the two rival champions, and then upon each other with amazement. The high-minded young man had but one course to pursue. Let the consequence be what it might, he could not think for a moment of compromising the character of Ellen, nor of violating his promise, so solemnly given; with a flushed cheek, therefore, and a brow redder even with shame than indignation, he left the crowd without speaking a word, for he feared that by indulging in any further recrimination on the subject, his resolution might give way under the impetuous resentment which he curbed in with such difficulty.

Meehaul Neil paused and looked after him, equally struck with surprise and contempt at his apparent want of spirit.

"Well," he exclaimed to those who stood about him, "by the life within me, if all the parish had sworn that Lamh Laudher Oge was a coward, I'd not a b'lieved them!"

"Faix, Misther Neil, who would, no more than yourself?" they replied; "devil the likes of it ever we seen! The young fellow that no man could stand afore five minutes!"



## CHAPTER III.

MEEHAUL now directed his steps homewards, literally stunned by the unexpected cowardice of his enemy. On approaching his father's door, he found Nell M'Collum seated on a stone bench, waiting his arrival. The moment she espied him she sprang to her feet, and with her usual eagerness of manner, caught the breast of his coat, and turning him round towards the moonlight, looked eagerly into his face.

"Well," she inquired, "did he show his fire-arms? Eh? What was done?"

"Somebody has been making a fool of you, Nell," replied Meehaul; "he had neither fire-arms, nor staff, nor any thing else; an' for my part, I might as well have left mine at home."

"Well, but, *douol*, man, what was done? Did you smash him? Did you break his bones?"

"None of that, Nell, but worse; he's disgraced for ever. I struck him, an' he refused to fight me; he hadn't a hand to raise.

"No, *Dher Chiernah*, he had not; an' he may thank Nell M'Collum for *that*. I put the weakness over him. But I've not done wid him yet. I'll make that family curse the day they crossed Nell M'Collum, if should go *down* for it. Not that I have any ill will to the boy himself, but the father's heart's in him, an' that's the way, Meehaul, I'll

punish the man that was the means of lavin' me as I am."

"Nell, the devil's in your heart," replied Meehaul, "if ever he was in mortal's. Lave me, woman: I can't bear your revengeful spirit, an' what is more, I don't want *you* to interfere in this business, good, bad, or indifferent. You bring about harm, Nell; but who has ever known you to do good?"

"Ay! ay!" said the hag, "that's the cuckoo song to Nell; she does harm, but never does good! Well, may my blackest curse wither the man that left Nell to hear that, as the kindest word that's spoke either to her or of her! I don't blame you, Meehaul—I blame nobody but *him* for it all. Now a word of advice before you go in; don't let on to Ellen that you know of her meetin' him this night;—an' reason good,—if she thinks you're watchin' her, she'll be on her guard—ay, an' outdo you in spite of your teeth. She's a woman—she's a woman! Good night, an' *mark* him the next time better."

Meehaul himself had come to the same determination and from the same motive.

The consciousness of Lamh Laudher's public disgrace, and of his incapability to repel it, sank deep into his heart. The blood in his veins became hot and feverish, when he reflected upon the scornful and degrading insult he had just borne. Soon after his return home, his father and mother both noticed the singularly deep bursts of indignant feeling with which he appeared to be agitated. For some time they declined making any inquiry as to its cause, but when they saw at length the big scalding tears

of shame and rage start from his flashing eyes, they could no longer restrain their concern and curiosity.

"In the name of heaven, John," said they, "what has happened to put you into such a state as you're in?"

"I can't tell you," he replied; "if you knew it, you'd blush with burnin' shame—you'd curse me in your heart. For my part I'd rather be dead fifty times over than livin', after what has happened this night."

"An' why not tell us, Lamb Laudher?"

"I can't father; I couldn't stand upright afore you and spake it. I'd sink like a guilty man in your presence; an' except you want to drive me distracted, or perjured, don't ask me another question about it. You'll hear it too soon."

"Well, we must wait," said the father; "but I'm sure, John, you'd not do anything unbecomin' a man. For my part, I'm not unasy on your account, for except to take an affront from a Neil, there's nothing you would do could shame me."

This was a fresh stab to the son's wounded pride, for which he was not prepared. With a stifled groan he leaped to his feet, and rushing from the kitchen, bolted himself up in his bed-room.

His parents, after he had withdrawn exchanged glances.

"That went home to him," said the father; "an' as sure as death, the Neils are in it, whatever it is. But by the crass that saved us, if he tuck an affront from any of *them*, without payin' them home double,



he is no son of mine, an' this roof won't cover him another night. Howsomever we'll see in the mornin', plase God!"

The mother, who was proud of his courage and prowess, scouted with great indignation the idea of *her* son's tamely putting up with an insult from any of the opposite faction.

"Is it he bear an affront from a Niel! arrah, don't make a fool of yourself, old man! He'd die sooner. I'd stake my life on him."

The night advanced, and the family had retired to bed; but their son attempted in vain to sleep. A sense of shame overpowered him keenly. He tossed and turned, and groaned, at the contemplation of the disgrace which he knew would be heaped on him the following day. What was to be done? How was he to wipe it off? There was but one method, he believed, of getting his hands once more free; that was to seek Ellen, and gain her permission to retract his oath on that very night. With this purpose he instantly dressed himself, and quietly unbolting his own door, and that of the kitchen, got another staff, and passed out to seek her father's inn.

The night had now become dark, but mild and agreeable; the repose of man and nature was deep, and save his own tumultuous thoughts every thing breathed an air of peace and rest. At a quick but cautious pace he soon reached the inn, and without much difficulty passed into the garden, from which he hoped to be able to make himself known to Ellen. In this, to his great mortification, he was

disappointed; the room in which she slept, being on the third story, presented a window, it is true, to the garden; but how was he to reach it, or hold a dialogue with her, even should she recognize him, without being overheard by some of the family? All this might have occurred to him at home, had he been sufficiently cool for reflection. As it was, the only method of awakening her that he could think of was to throw up several handfuls of small pebbles against the window. This he tried without any effect. Pebbles sufficiently large to reach the window would have broken the glass, so that he felt himself compelled to abandon every hope of speaking to her that night. With lingering and reluctant steps he left the garden, and stood for some time before the front of the house, leaning against an upright stone, called the market cross. Here he had not been more than two minutes, when he heard footsteps approaching, and on looking closely through the darkness, he recognized the figure of Nell M'Collum, as it passed directly to the kitchen window. Here the crone stopped, peered in, and with caution gave one of the panes a gentle tap. This was responded to by one much louder from within, and almost immediately the door was softly opened. From thence issued another female figure, evidently that of Nanse M'Collum, her niece. Both passed down the street in a northern direction, and Lamh Laudher, apprehensive that they were on no good errand, took off his shoes, lest his footsteps might be heard, and dogged them as they went along. They spoke little, and that in

whispers, until they had got clear of the town, when, feeling less restraint, the following dialogue occurred to them:—

“Isn’t it a quare thing, aunt, that *she* should come back to this place at all?”

“Quare enough, but the husband’s comin’ too—he’s to folly her.”

“He ought to know that he needn’t come here, I think.”

“Why, you fool, how do *you* know that? Sure the town must pay him fifty guineas, if he doesn’t get a customer, and that’s worth comin’ for. *She* must be near us by this time. Husht! do you hear a car?”

They both paused to listen, but no car was audible.

“I do not,” replied the niece; “but isn’t it odd that he lets *her* carry the money, an’ him trates her so badly?”

“Why would it be odd? Sure, she takes betther care of it, an’ puts it farther than he does. His heart’s in a farden, the nager.”

“Rody an’ the other will soon spare her that trouble, any way,” replied the niece. “Is there no one wid her but the carman?”

“Not one—hould your tongue—here’s the gate where the same pair was to meet us. Who is this stranger that Rody has picked up? I hope he’s the thing.”

“Some red-headed fellow. Rody says he is honest. I’m wondherin’, aunt, what ’ud happen if she’d know the place.”

"She can't, *girshah*—an' what if she does? *She* may know the place, but will the place know her? Rody's friend says the best way is to do for her; an' I'm afeard of her, to tell you the truth—but we'll settle that when they come. There now is the gate where we'll sit down. Give a cough till we try if they're—whist! here they are!"

The voices of two men now joined the conversation, but in so low a tone, that *Lamh Laudher* could not distinctly hear its purport.

The road along which they traveled, was craggy, and full of ruts, so that a car could be heard in the silence of night at a considerable distance. On each side the ditches were dry and shallow; and a small elder hedge, which extended its branches towards the road, afforded *Lamh Laudher* the obscurity which he wanted. With stealthy pace he crept over and sat beneath it, determined to witness whatever incident might occur, and to take a part in it, if necessary. He had scarcely seated himself when the car which they expected was heard jolting about half a mile off along the way, and the next moment a consultation took place in tones so low and guarded, that every attempt on his part to catch its purport was unsuccessful. This continued with much earnestness, if not warmth, until the car came within twenty perches of the gate, when *Nell* exclaimed—

"If you do, you may—but remimber *I* didn't egg you on, or put it into your hearts, at all evinta. Maybe I have a child myself livin'—far from me—an' when I think of him, I feel one touch of nature

at my heart in favor of her still. I'm black enough there, as it is."

"Make your mind asy," said one of them, "*you* won't have to answer for her."

The reply which was given to this could not be heard.

"Well," rejoined Nell, "I know that. Her comin' here may not be for my good; but—well, take this shawl, an' let the work be quick. The carman must be sent back with sore bones to keep him quiet."

The car immediately reached the spot where they sat, and as it passed, the two men rushed from the gate, stopped the horse, and struck the carman to the earth. One of them seized him while down, and pressed his throat, so as to prevent him from shouting. A single faint shriek escaped the female, who was instantly dragged off the car and gagged by the other fellow and Nanse M'Collum.

Lamh Laudher saw there was not a moment to be lost. With the speed of lightning he sprung forward, and with a single blow laid him who struggled with the carman prostrate. To pass then to the aid of the female was only the work of an instant. With equal success he struck down the villain with whom she was struggling. Such was the rapidity of his motions, that he had not yet had time even to speak; nor indeed did he wish at all to be recognized in the transaction. The carman, finding himself freed from his opponent, bounced to his legs, and came to the assistance of his charge, whilst Lamh Laudher, who had just flung Nanse M'Collum

into the ditch, returned in time to defend both from a second attack. The contest, however, was a short one. The two ruffians, finding that there was no chance of succeeding, fled across the fields; and our humble hero, on looking for Nanse and her aunt, discovered that they also had disappeared. It is unnecessary to detail the strong terms in which the strangers expressed their gratitude to Lamh Laudher.

"God's grace be upon you, whoever you are, young man!" exclaimed the carman; "for wid His help an' your own good arm, it's my downright opinion that you saved us from bein' both robbed an' murdered."

"I'm of that opinion myself," replied Lamh Laudher.

"There is goodness, young man, in the tones of your voice," observed the female; "we may at least ask the name of the person who has saved our lives?"

"I would rather not have my name mentioned in the business," he replied; "a woman, or a devil, I think, that I don't wish to cross or provoke, has had a hand in it. I hope you haven't been robbed?" he added.

She assured him, with expressions of deep gratitude, that she had not.

"Well," said he, "as you have neither of you come to much harm, I would take it as the greatest favor you could do me, if you'd never mention a word about it to any one."

To this request they agreed with some hesitation.

Lamh Laudher accompanied them into the town, and saw them safely in a decent second-rate inn, kept by a man named Luke Connor, after which he returned to his father's house, and without undressing, fell into a disturbed slumber until morning.

It is not to be supposed that the circumstances attending the quarrel between him and Meehaul Neil, on the preceding night, would pass off without a more than ordinary share of public notice. Their relative positions were too well known not to excite an interest corresponding with the characters they had borne, as the leaders of two bitter and powerful factions: but when it became certain that Meehaul Neil had struck Lamh Laudher Oge, and that the latter refused to fight him, it is impossible to describe the sensation which immediately spread through the town and parish. The intelligence was first received by O'Rorke's party with incredulity and scorn. It was impossible that he of the Strong Hand, who had been proverbial for courage, could all at once turn coward, and bear the blow from a Neil! But when it was proved beyond the possibility of doubt or misconception, that he received a blow tamely before many witnesses, under circumstances of the most degrading insult, the rage of his party became incredible. Before ten o'clock the next morning his father's house was crowded with friends and relations, anxious to hear the truth from his own lips, and all, after having heard it, eager to point out to him the only method that remained of wiping away his disgrace, — namely, to challenge Meehaul Neil. His father's indig-

nation knew no bounds; but his mother, on discovering the truth, was not without that pride and love which are ever ready to form an apology for the feelings and errors of an only child.

"You may all talk," she said; "but if Lamh Laudher Oge didn't strike him, he had good reasons for it. How do you know, an' bad cess to your tongues, all through other, how Ellen Neil would like him after welting her brother? Don't ye think she has the spirit of her faction in her as well as another?"

This, however, was not listened to, The father would hear of no apology for his son's cowardice but an instant challenge. Either that or to be driven from his father's roof were the only alternatives left him.

"Come out here," said the old man, for the son had not left his humble bed-room, "an' in presence of them that you have brought to shame and disgrace, take the only plan that's left to you, an' send him a challenge."

"Father," said the young man, "I have too much of your own blood in me to be afraid of any man—but for all that, I neither will nor *can* fight Mee-haul Neil."

"Very well," said the father, bitterly, "that's enough. *Dher Manim*, Oonagh, you're a guilty woman; that boy's no son of mine. If he had my blood in him, he couldn't act as he did. Here, you intherloper, the door's open for you; go out of it, an' let me never see the branded face of you while you live."



The groans of the son were audible from his bed-room.

"I will go, father," he replied, "an' I hope the day will come when you'll all change your opinion of me. I can't, however, stir out till I send a message a mile or so out of town."

The old man in the mean time, wept as if his son had been dead; his tears, however, were not those of sorrow, but of shame and indignation.

"How can I help it," he exclaimed, "when I think of the way that the Neils will clap their wings and crow over us! If it was from any other family he tuck it so manely, I wouldn't care so much; but from *them*! Oh, Chiernah! it's too bad! Turn out, you villain!"

A charge of deeper disgrace, however, awaited the unhappy young man. The last harsh words of the father had scarcely been uttered, when three constables came in, and inquired if his son were at home.

"He is at home," said the father, with tears in his eyes, "and I never thought he would bring the blush to my face as he did by his conduct last night."

"I am sorry," said the principal of them, "for what has happened, both on your account and his. Do you know this hat?"

"I do know it," replied the old man; "it belongs to John. Come out here," said he, "here's Tom Breen wid your hat."

The son left his room, and it was evident from his appearance that he had not undressed at all dur-

ing the night. The constables immediately observed these circumstances, which they did not fail to interpret to his disadvantage.

"Here is your hat," said the man who bore it; "one would think you were travelin' all night, by your looks."

The son thanked him for his civility, got clean stockings, and after arranging his dress, said to his father—

"I'm now ready to go, father, an' as I can't do what you want me to do, there's nothing for me but to leave the country for a while."

"He acknowledged it himself," said the father, turning to Breen; "an' in that case, how could I let the son that shamed me live undher my roof?"

"He's the last young man in the county I stand in," said Breen, "that any one who knew him would suspect to be guilty of robbery. Upon my soul, Lamh Laudher More, I'm both grieved an' distressed at it. We're come to arrest him," he added, "for the robbery he committed last night."

"Robbery!" they exclaimed with one voice.

"Ay," said the man, "robbery, no less—an' what is more, I'm afraid there's little doubt of his guilt. Why did he lave his hat at the place where the attempt was first made? He must come with us."

The mother shrieked aloud, and clapped her hands like a distressed woman; the father's brow changed from the flushed hue of indignation, and became pale with apprehension.

"Oh! no, no," he exclaimed, "John never did that. Some qualm might come over him in the

other business, but—no, no—your father knows you're innocent of robbery. Yes, John, my blood *is* in you, and *there* you're wronged, my son. I know you too well, in spite of all I've said to you, to believe *that*, my true-hearted boy."

He grasped his son's hand as he spoke, and his mother at the same moment caught him in her arms, whilst both sobbed aloud. A strong sense of innate dignity expanded the brow of young Lamh Laudher. He smiled while his parents wept, although his sympathy in their sorrow brought a tear at the same time to his eye-lids. He declined, however, entering into any explanation, and the father proceeded—

"Yes! I know you are innocent, John; I can swear that you didn't leave this house from nine o'clock last night up to the present minute."

"Father," said Lamh Laudher, "don't swear that, for it would not be true, although you *think* it would. I was out the greater part of last night."

His father's countenance fell again, as did those of his friends who were present, on hearing what appeared to be almost an admission of his guilt.

"Go," said the old man, "go; naburs, take him with you. If he's guilty of this, I'll never more look upon his face. John, my heart was crushed before, but you're likely to break it out an' out."

Lamh Laudher Oge's deportment, on hearing himself charged with robbery, became dogged and sullen. The conversation, together with the sympathy and the doubt it excited among his friends, he treated with silent indignation and scorn. He

remembered that on the night before, the strange woman assured him she had *not* been robbed, and he felt that the charge was exceedingly strange and unaccountable.

"Come," said he, "the sooner this business is cleared up the better. For my part, I don't know what to make of it, nor do I care much how it goes. I knew since yesterday evening, that bad luck was before me, at all events, an' I suppose it must take its course, an' that I must bear it."

The father had sat down, and now declined uttering a single word in vindication of his son. The latter looked towards him, when about to pass out, but the old man waved his hand with sorrowful impatience, and pointed to the door, as intimating a wish that he should forthwith depart from under his roof. Loaded with twofold disgrace, he left his family and his friends, accompanied by the constables, to the profound grief and astonishment of all who knew him.

They then conducted him before a Mr. Brookleigh, an active magistrate of that day, and a gentleman of mild and humane character.



## CHAPTER IV.

ON reaching Brookleigh Hall, Lamh Laudher found the strange woman, Nell M'Collum, Connor's servant maid, and the carman awaiting his arrival. The magistrate looked keenly at the prisoner, and immediately glanced with an expression of strong disgust at Nell M'Collum. The other female surveyed Lamh Laudher with an interest evidently deep; after which she whispered something to Nell, who frowned and shook her head, as if dissenting from what she had heard. Lamh Laudher, on his part, surveyed the features of the female with an earnestness that seemed to absorb all sense of his own disgrace and danger.

"O'Rorke," said the magistrate, "this is a serious charge against you. I trust you may be able effectually to meet it."

"I must wait, your worship, till I hear fully what it is first," replied Lamh Laudher, "afther that I'm not afraid of clearin' myself from it."

The woman then detailed the circumstances of the robbery, which it appeared took place at the moment her luggage was in the act of being removed to her room, after which she added, rather unexpectedly—"And now your worship, I have plainly stated the facts; but I must, in conscience, add, that although this woman," turning to Nell M'Collum, "is of opinion that the young man before you has robbed me, yet I cannot think he did."

"I'll swear, your worship," said Nell, "that on passin' homewards last night, seein' a car wid people about it, at Luke Connor's door, I stood behind the porch, merely to thry if I knew who they wor. I seen this Lamh Laudher wid a small oak box in his haads, an' I'll give my oath that it was open, an' that he put his hand into it, and tuck something out."

"Pray, Nell, how did it happen that you yourself were abroad at so unseasonable an hour?" said the magistrate.

"Every one knows that I'm out at quare hours," replied Nell; "I'm not like others. I know where I ought to be, at all times; but last night, if your worship wishes to hear the truth, I was on my way to Andy Murray's wake, the poor lad that was shepherd to the Neils."

"And pray, Nell," said his worship, "how did *you* form so sudden an acquaintance with this respectable-looking woman?"

"I knew her for years," said Nell; "I've seen her in other parts of the country often."

"You were more than a hour with her last night—were you not?" said his worship.

"She made me stay wid her," said Nell, "bekase she was a stanger, an' of coorse was glad to see a face she knew, afther the fright she got."

"All very natural, Nell; but in the mean time, she might easily have chosen a more respectable associate. Have you actually lost the sum of six hundred pounds, my good madam?"

"I have positively lost so much," replied the

woman, "together with the certificate of my marriage."

"And how did you become acquainted with Nell M'Collum?" he inquired.

The stranger was silent, and blushed deeply at this question; but Nell, with more presence of mind, went over to the magistrate, and whispered something which caused him to start, look keenly at her, and then at the plaintiff.

"I must have this confirmed by herself," he said in reply to Nell's disclosure, "otherwise I shall be much more inclined to consider you the thief than O'Rorke, whose character has been hitherto unimpeachable and above suspicion."

He then beckoned the woman over to his desk, and after having first inquired if she could write, and being replied to in the affirmative, he placed a slip of paper before her, on which was written—"Is that unhappy woman called Nell M'Collum, your mother?"

"Alas! she is, sir," replied the female, with a deep expression of sorrow. The magistrate then appeared satisfied. "Now," said he, addressing O'Rorke, "state fairly and honestly what *you* have to say in reply to the charge brought against you."

"Please your worship," said the young man, "you hear the woman say that she brings *no* charge against me; but I can prove on oath, that Nell M'Collum and her niece, Nanse M'Collum, along with two men that I don't know, except that one was called Rody, met at Franklin's gate, with an

intention of robbing, an' it's my firm belief, of murdering this woman."

He then detailed with great earnestness the incidents and conversation of the preceding night.

"Sir," replied Nell, with astonishing promptness, "I can prove by two witnesses, that, no longer ago than last night, he said he would take to the high-road, in order to get money to enable him to marry Ellen Neil. Yes, you villain, Nanse M'Collum heard every word that passed between you and her in the grassy quarry; an' Ellen, your worship, can prove it too, if she's sent for."

This had little effect on the magistrate, who at no time placed any reliance on Nell's assertions; he immediately, however, dispatched a summons for Nanse M'Collum.

The carman then related all that *he* knew, every word of which strongly corroborated what Lamh Laudher had said. He concluded by declaring it to be his opinion, that the prisoner was innocent, and added, that according to the best of his belief, the box was *not* open when he left it in the plaintiff's sleeping-room above stairs.

The magistrate again looked keenly and suspiciously towards Nell. At this stage of the proceedings, O'Rorke's father and mother, accompanied by some of their friends, made their appearance. The old man, however, declined to take any part in the vindication of his son. He stood sullenly silent, with his arms folded and his brows knit, as much in indignation as in sorrow. The grief of the mother was louder for she wept audibly.



Ere the lapse of many minutes, the constable returned, and stated that Nanse was not to be found.

"She has not been at her master's house since morning," he observed, "and they don't know where she is, or what has become of her."

The magistrate immediately despatched two of the constables, with strict injunctions to secure her, if possible.

"In the mean time," he added, "I will order you, Nell M'Collum, to be strictly confined, until I ascertain whether she can be produced or not. Your haunts may be searched with some hope of success, while you are in durance; but I rather think we might seek for her in vain, if you were at liberty to regulate her motions. I cannot expect," he added, turning to the stranger, "that you should prosecute one so nearly related to you, even if you had proof, which you have not; but I am almost certain, that she has been someway or other concerned in the robbery. You are a modest, interesting woman, and I regret the loss you have sustained. At present there are no grounds for committing any of the parties charged with the robbery: This unhappy woman I commit only as a vagrant, until her niece is found, after that we shall probably be able to see somewhat farther into this strange affair."

"Something tells me, sir," replied the stranger, "that this young man is as innocent of the robbery as the child unborn. It's not my intention ever to think of prosecuting him. What I have done in the matter was against my own wishes."

"God in heaven bless you for the words!" ex

claimed the parents of O'Rorke, each pressing her hand with delight and gratitude. The woman warmly returned their greetings, but instantly felt her bosom heave with a hysterical oppression under which she sank into a state of insensibility. Lamh Laudher More and his wife were proceeding to bring her towards the door for air, when Nell M'Collum insisted on a prior right to render her that service. "Begone, you servant of the devil," exclaimed the old man, "your wicked breath is bad about any one else; you won't lay a hand upon her."

"Don't let her, for heaven's sake!" said his wife; "her eye will kill the woman!"

"You are not aware," said the magistrate, "that this woman is her daughter."

"Whose daughter, please your honor," said the old man indignantly.

"Nell M'Collum's," he returned.

"It's as false as hell!" rejoined O'Rorke, "beggin' your honor's pardon for sayin' so. I mean it's false for Nell, if she says it. Nell, sir, never had a daughter, an' she knows that; but she had a son, an' she knows best what became of him."

Nell, however, resolved not to be deterred from getting the stranger into her own hands. With astonishing strength and fury she attempted to drag the insensible creature from O'Rorke's grasp; but the magistrate, disgusted at her violence, ordered two of the persons present to hold her down.

At length the woman began to recover. She

sobbed aloud, and a copious flow of tears drenched her cheeks. Nell ordered her to tear herself from O'Rorke and his wife:—

"Their hands are bad about you," she exclaimed, "and their son has robbed you, Mary. Lave them, I say, or it will be worse for you."

The woman paid her no attention; on the contrary, she laid her head on the bosom of O'Rorke's wife, and wept as if her heart would break.

"God help me!" she exclaimed with a bitter sense of her situation, "I am an unhappy, an' a heart-broken woman! For many a year I have not known what it is to have a friendly breast to weep on."

She then caught O'Rorke's hand and kissed it affectionately, after which she wept afresh; "Merciful heaven!" said she—"oh, how will I ever be able to meet my husband! and such a husband! oh, heavens pity me!"

Both O'Rorke and his wife stood over her in tears. The latter bent her head, kissed the stranger, and pressed her to her bosom.

"May God bless you!" said O'Rorke himself solemnly; "trust in Him, for he can see justice done to you when man fails."

The eyes of Nell glared at the group like those of an enraged tigress: she stamped her feet upon the floor, and struck it repeatedly with her stick, as she was in the habit of doing, when moved by strong and deadly passions.

"You'll suffer for that, Mary," she exclaimed; "and as for you, Lamh Laudher More, my debt's

not paid to *you* yet. Your son's a robber, an' I'll prove it before long; every one knows he's a *coward* too."

Mr. Brookleigh felt that there appeared to be something connected with the transactions of the preceding night, as well as with some of the persons who had come before him, that perplexed him not a little. He thought that, considering the serious nature of the charge preferred against young O'Rorke, he exhibited an apathy under it, that did not altogether argue innocence. Some unsettled suspicions entered his mind, but not with sufficient force to fix with certainty upon any of those present, except Nell and Nanse M'Collum who had absconded. If Nell were the woman's mother, her anxiety to bring the criminal to justice appeared very natural. Then, again, young O'Rorke's father, who seemed to know the history of Nell M'Collum, denied that she ever had a daughter. How could *he* be certain that she had not, without knowing her private life thoroughly? These circumstances appeared rather strange, if not altogether incomprehensible; so much so, indeed, that he thought it necessary, before they separated, to speak with O'Rorke's family in private. Having expressed a wish to this effect, he dismissed the other parties, except Nell, whom he intended to keep confined until the discovery of her niece.

"Pray," said he to the father of our humble hero, "how do you know, O'Rorke, that Nell M'Collum never had a daughter?"

"Right well, your honor. I knew her since she

was a child; an' from that day to this she was never six months from this town at a time. No, no—a son she had, but a daughter she never had.”

“Let me ask you, young man, on what business were you abroad last night? I expect you will answer me candidly?”

“It’s no matther,” replied young Lamh Laudher gloomily, “my character’s gone. I cannot be worse, an’ I will tell no man how I spent it, till I have an opportunity of clearin’ myself.”

“If you spent it innocently,” returned the magistrate, “you can have no hesitation in making the disclosure we require.”

“I will not mention it,” said the other; “I was disgraced, an’ that is enough. I think but little of the robbery.”

Brookleigh understood him; but the last assertion, though it exonerated him in the opinion of a man who knew something about character, went far in that of his friends who were present to establish his guilt.

They then withdrew; and it would have been much to young Lamh Laudher’s advantage if this private interview had never taken place.



## CHAPTER V.

THE next morning O'Rorke and his wife waited upon Mr. Brookleigh to state, that in their opinion it would be more judicious to liberate Nell M'Collum, provided he kept a strict watch upon all her motions. The magistrate instantly admitted both the force and ingenuity of the thought; and after having appointed three persons to the task of keeping her under *surveillance*, he set her at large.

This was all judicious and prudent; but in the mean time, common rumor, having first published the fact of young Lamh Laudher's cowardice, found it an easy task to associate his name with the robbery. His very father, after their last conference with the magistrate, doubted him; his friends, in the most sympathetic terms, expressed their conviction of his guilt, and the natural consequence resulting from this was, that he found himself expelled from his paternal roof, and absolutely put out of *caste*. The tide of ill fame, in fact, set in so strongly against him, that Ellen, startled as she had been by his threat of taking to the highway, doubted him. The poor young man, in truth, led a miserable life. Nanse M'Collum had not been found, and the unfavorable rumor was still at its height, when one morning the town arose and found

the walls and streets placarded with what was in those days known as the fatal challenge of the DEAD BOXER!

This method of intimating his arrival had always been peculiar to that individual, who was a man of color. No person ever discovered the means by which he placarded his dreadful challenge. In an age of gross superstition, numerous were the rumors and opinions promulgated concerning this circumstance. The general impression was, that an evil spirit attended him, by whose agency his advertisements were put up at night. A law, it is said, then existed, that when a pugilist arrived in any town, he might claim the right to receive the sum of fifty guineas, provided no man in the town could be found to accept his challenge within a given period. A champion, if tradition be true, had the privilege of fixing only the place, not the mode and regulations, of battle. Accordingly the scene of contest uniformly selected by the Dead Boxer was the church-yard of the town, beside a new made grave, dug at his expense. The epithet of the Dead Boxer had been given to him, in consequence of a certain fatal stroke by which he had been able to kill every antagonist who dared to meet him; precisely on the same principle that we call a fatal marksman a *dead shot*; and the church-yard was selected, and the grave prepared, in order to denote the fatality incurred by those who went into a contest with him. He was famous, too, at athletic sports, but was never known to communicate the secret of the fatal blow; he also taught

the sword exercises, at which he was considered to be a proficient.

On the morning after his arrival, the town in which we have laid the scene of this legend felt the usual impulse of an intense curiosity to see so celebrated a character. The Dead Boxer, however, appeared to be exceedingly anxious to gratify this natural propensity. He walked out from the head inn, where he had stopped, attended by his servant, merely, it would appear, to satisfy them as to the very slight chance which the stoutest of them had in standing before a man whose blow was so fatal, and whose frame so prodigiously herculean.

Twelve o'clock was the hour at which he deemed proper to make his appearance, and as it happened also to be the market-day of the town, the crowd which followed him was unprecedented. The old and young, the hale and feeble of both sexes, all rushed out to see, with feelings of fear and wonder, the terrible and far-famed Dead Boxer. The report of his arrival had already spread far and wide into the country, and persons belonging to every class and rank of life might be seen hastening on horseback, and more at full speed on foot, that they might, if possible, catch an early glimpse of him. The most sporting characters among the nobility and gentry of the country, fighting-peers, fire-eaters, snuff-candle squires, members of the hell-fire and jockey clubs, gaugers, gentlemen farmers, bluff yeomen, laborers, cudgel-players, parish pugilists, men of renown within a district of ten square miles, all jostled each other in hurrying



to see, and if possible to have speech of, the Dead Boxer. Not a word was spoken that day, except with reference to him, nor a conversation introduced, the topic of which was not the Dead Boxer. In the town every window was filled with persons standing to get a view of him; so were the tops of the houses, the dead walls, and all the cars, gates, and available eminences within sight of the way along which he went. Having thus perambulated the town, he returned to the market-cross, which, as we have said, stood immediately in front of his inn. Here, attended by music, he personally published his challenge in a deep and sonorous voice, calling upon the corporation in right of his championship, to produce a man in ten clear days ready to undertake battle with him as a pugilist, or otherwise to pay him the sum of fifty guineas out of their own proper exchequer.

Having thus thrown down his gauntlet, the musicians played a dead march, and there was certainly something wild and fearful in the association produced by these strains of death and the fatality of encountering him. This challenge he repeated at the same place and hour during three successive days, after which he calmly awaited the result.

In the mean time, certain circumstances came to light, which not only developed many cruel and profligate traits in his disposition, but also enabled the worthy inhabitants of the town to ascertain several facts relating to his connections, which in no small degree astonished them. The candid and modest female whose murder and robbery had been

planned by Nell M'Collum, resided with him as his wife : at least if he did not acknowledge her as such, no person who had an opportunity of witnessing her mild and gentle deportment, ever for a moment conceived her capable of living with him in any other character. His conduct to her, however, was brutal in the extreme, nor was his open and unmanly cruelty lessened by the misfortune of her having lost the money which he had accumulated. With Nell M'Collum he was also acquainted, for he had given orders that she should be admitted to him whenever she deemed it necessary. Nell, though now at large, found her motions watched with a vigilance which no ingenuity on her part could baffle. She knew this, and was resolved by caution to overreach those who dogged her so closely. Her intimacy with the Dead Boxer threw a shade of still deeper mystery around her own character and his. Both were supposed to be capable of entering into evil communion with supernatural beings, and both, of course, were looked upon with fear and hatred, modified, to be sure, by the peculiarity of their respective situations.

Let not our readers, however, suppose that young Lamh Laudher's disgrace was altogether lost in the wide-spread fame of the Dead Boxer. His high reputation for generous and manly feeling had given him too strong a hold upon the hearts of all who knew him, to be at once discarded by them from public conversation as an indifferent person. His conduct filled them with wonder, it is true; but

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although the general tone of feeling respecting the robbery was decidedly in his favor, yet there still existed among the public, particularly in the faction that was hostile to him, enough of doubt, openly expressed, to render it a duty to avoid him; particularly when this formidable suspicion was joined to the notorious fact of his cowardice in the rencounter with Meehaul Neil. Both subjects were therefore discussed with probably an equal interest; but it is quite certain that the rumor of Lamh Laudher's cowardice would alone have occasioned him, under the peculiar circumstances which drew it forth, to be avoided and branded with contumely. There was, in fact, then in existence among the rival factions in Ireland much of the military sense of honor which characterizes the British army at this day; nor is this spirit even yet wholly exploded from our humble countrymen. Poor Lamh Laudher was, therefore, an exile from his father's house, repulsed and avoided by all who had formerly been intimate with him.

There was another individual, however, who deeply sympathized in all he felt, because she knew that for her sake it had been incurred; we allude to Ellen Neil. Since the night of their last interview, she, too, had been scrupulously watched by her relations. But what vigilance can surpass the ingenuity of love? Although her former treacherous confidant had absconded, yet the incident of the Dead Boxer's arrival had been the means of supplying her with a friend, into whose bosom she felt that she could pour out all the anxieties of

her heart. This was no other than the Dead Boxer's wife; and there was this peculiarity in the interest which she took in Ellen's distress, that it was only a return of sympathy which Ellen felt in the unhappy woman's sufferings. The conduct of her husband was indefensible; for while he treated her with shameful barbarity, it was evident that his bad passions and his judgment were at variance, with respect to the estimate which he formed of her character. In her honesty he placed every confidence, and permitted her to manage his money and regulate his expenses; but this was merely because her frugality and economic habits gratified his parsimony, and fostered one of his strongest passions, which was avarice. There was something about this amiable creature that won powerfully upon the affections of Ellen Neil; and in entrusting her with the secret of her love, she felt assured that she had not misplaced it. Their private conversations, therefore, were frequent, and their communications unreserved on both sides, so far as woman can bestow confidence and friendship on the subject of her affections or her duty. This intimacy did not long escape the prying eyes of Nell M'Collum, who soon took means to avail herself of it for purposes which will shortly become evident.

It was about the sixth evening after the day on which the Dead Boxer had published his challenge, that, having noticed Nell from a window as she passed the inn, he dispatched a waiter with a message that she should be sent up to him. Previous to this the hag had been several times with his

wife, on whom she laid serious injunctions never to disclose to her husband the relationship between them. The woman had never done so, for in fact the acknowledgment of Nell, as her mother, would have been to any female whose feelings had not been made callous by the world, a painful and distressing task. Nell was the more anxious on this point, as she feared that such a disclosure would have frustrated her own designs.

"Well, granny," said he, when Nell entered, "any word of the money?"

Nell cautiously shut the door, and stood immediately fronting him, her hand at some distance from her side, supported by her staff, and her grey glittering eyes fixed upon him with that malicious look which she never could banish from her countenance.

"The money will come," she replied, "in good time. I've a charm near ready that'll get a clue to it. I'm watchin' *him*—an' *I'm* watched myself—an' *Ellen's* watched. He has hardly a house to put his head in; but *nabocklish*! I'll bring you an' him together—ay, *dher manim*, an' I'll make him give you the first blow; afther that, if you don't give him *ONE*, it's your own fau't."

"Get the money first, granny. I won't give him the blow till it is safe."

"Won't you?" replied the beldame; "ay, *dher Creestha*, will you, whin you know what I have to tell you about him an'—an'——"

"And who, granny?"

"*Diououl*, man, but I'm afeard to tell you, for fraid you'd kill me."

"Tut, Nelly; I'd not strike an Obeah-woman," said he, laughing.

"I suspect foul play between him an'—*her*."

"Eh? Fury of hell, no!"

"He's very handsome," said the other, "an' young—far younger than you are, by thirteen—"

"Go on—go on," said the Dead Boxer, interrupting her, and clenching his fist, whilst his eyes literally glowed like live coals, "go on—I'll murder him, but not till—yes, I'll murder him at a blow—I will; but no—not till you secure the money *first*. If I give him the blow—~~THE~~ BOX—I might never get it, granny. A dead man gives back nothing."

"I suspect," replied Nell, "*arraghid*—that is the money—is in other hands. Lord presarve us! but it's a wicked world, blackey."

"Where is it!" said the Boxer, with a vehemence of manner resembling that of a man who was ready to sink to perdition for his wealth. "Devil! and furies! where is it?"

"Where is it?" said the imperturbable Nell; "why, *manim a yeah*, man, sure you don't think that *I* know where it is? I suspect that your landlord's daughter, his *raal* sweetheart, knows something about it; but thin, you see, I can *prove* nothing; I only suspect. We must watch an' wait. You know *she* wouldn't prosecute him."

"We *will* watch an' wait—but I'll finish *him*. Tell me, Nell—fury of hell, woman—can it be possible—no—well—I'll murder him, though; but can

it be possible that *she's* guilty? eh? She wouldn't prosecute him!—No—no—she would not."

"She is not worthy of you, blackey. Lord save us! Well, troth, I remimber whin you wor in Lord S—'s, you were a fine young man of your color. I did something for the young lord in my way then, an' I used to say, when I called to see *her*, that you wor a beauty, barrin' the face. Sure enough, there was no lie in that. Well, that was before you tuck to the fightin'; but I'm ravin'. Whisper, man. If you doubt what I'm sayin', watch the north corner of the orchard about nine to-night, an' you'll see a meetin' between *her* an' O'Rorke. God be wid you! I must go."

"Stop!" said the Boxer; "don't—but *do* get a charm for the money."

"Good by," said Nell; "*you* a heart wid your money! No; *damnhó sherry* on the charm ever I'll get you till you show more spunk. You! My curse on the money, man, when your disgrace is consarned!"

Nell passed rapidly, and with evident indignation out of the room; nor could any entreaty on the part of the Dead Boxer induce her to return and prolong the dialogue.

She had said enough, however, to produce in his bosom torments almost equal to those of the damned. In several of their preceding dialogues, she had impressed him with a belief that young Lamh Laudher was the person who had robbed his wife; and now to the hatred that originated in a spirit of avarice, she added the deep and deadly one of jea-

lousy. On the other hand, the Dead Boxer had, in fact, begun to feel the influence of Ellen Neil's beauty; and perhaps nothing would have given him greater satisfaction than the removal of a woman whom he no longer loved, except for those virtues which enabled him to accumulate money. And now, too, had he an equal interest in the removal of his double rival, whom, besides, he considered the spoliator of his hoarded property. The loss of this money certainly stung him to the soul, and caused his unfortunate wife to suffer a tenfold degree of persecution and misery. When to this we add his sudden passion for Ellen Neil, we may easily conceive what she must have endured. Nell, at all events, felt satisfied that she had shaped the strong passions of her savage dupe in the way best calculated to gratify that undying spirit of vengeance which she had so long nurtured against the family of Lamh Laudher. The Dead Boxer, too, was determined to prosecute his amour with Ellen Neil, not more to gratify his lawless affection for her than his twofold hatred of Lamh Laudher.

At length nine o'clock arrived, and the scene must change to the northern part of Sheemus Neil's orchard. The Dead Boxer threw a cloak around him, and issuing through the back door of the inn, entered the garden, which was separated from the orchard only by a low clipped hedge of young whitethorn, in the middle of which stood a small gate. In a moment he was in the orchard, and from behind its low wall he perceived a female proceeding to the north side muffled like himself in a cloak,



which he immediately recognized to be that of his wife. His teeth became locked together with the most deadly resentment; his features twitched with the convulsive spasms of rage, and his nostrils were distended as if his victims stood already within his grasp. He instantly threw himself over the wall, and nothing but the crashing weight of his tread could have saved the lives of the two unsuspecting persons before him. Startled, however, by the noise of his footsteps, Lamh Laudher turned round to observe who it was that followed them, and immediately the massy and colossal black now stripped of his cloak—for he had thrown it aside—stood in their presence. The female instinctively drew the cloak round her face, and Lamh Laudher was about to ask why he followed them, when the Boxer approached him in an attitude of assault.

With a calmness almost unparalleled under the circumstances, Lamh Laudher desired the female by no means to cling to him.

"If you do," said he, "I am murdered where I stand."

"No," she shrieked, "you shall not. Stand back, man, stand back. If you murder him I will take care you shall suffer for it. Stand back. Lamh Laudher never injured you."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Boxer, in reply; "why, what is this! Who have we here?"

Ellen, for it was she, had already thrown back the cloak from her features, and stepped forward between them.

"Well, I am glad it is you," said the black, "and so may he. Come, I shall conduct you home."

He caught her arm as he spoke, and drew her over to his side like an infant.

"Come, my pretty girl, come; I will treat you tenderly, and all I shall ask is a kiss in return. Here, young fellow," said he to Lamh Laudher, with a sense of bitter triumph, "I will show you that one black kiss is worth two white ones."

Heavy, hard, and energetic was the blow which the Dead Boxer received upon the temple, as the reply of Lamh Laudher, and dead was the crash of his tremendous body on the earth. Ellen looked around her with amazement.

"Come," said she, seizing her lover's arm, and dragging him onward: "gracious heavens! I hope you haven't killed him. Come, John, the time is short, and we must make the most of it. That villain, as I told you before, *is* a villain. Oh! if you knew it! John, I have been the manes of your disgrace and suffering, but I am willing to do what I can to remedy that. In your disgrace, Ellen will be ready, in four days from this, to become your wife. John, come to meet me no more. I will send that villain's innocent wife to your aunt Alley's, where you now live. I didn't expect to see you myself; but I got an opportunity, and besides she was too unwell to bring my message, which was to let you know what I now tell you."

John, ere he replied, looked behind him at the Dead Boxer, and appeared as if struck with some sudden thought.

"He is movin'," said he, "an' on this night I don't wish to meet him again; *but*—yes, Ellen, yes—God bless you for the words you've said; but how could *you* for one minute doubt me about the robbery?"

"I did not, John—I did not; and if I did, think of your own words at our meetin' in the Quarry; it was a small suspicion, though—no more. No, no; *at heart* I never doubted you."

"Ellen," said John, "hear me. You never will become my wife till my disgrace is wiped away. I love you too well ever to see you blush for your husband. My mind's made up—so say no more. Ay, an' I tell you that to live three months in this state would break my heart."

"Poor John!" she exclaimed, as they separated, and the words were followed by a gush of tears, "I know that there is not one of them, in either of the factions, so noble in heart and thought as *you* are."

"I'll prove that soon, Ellen; but never till my name is fair and clear, an' without spot, can *you* be *my* wife. Good night, dearest; in every thing but *that* I'll be guided by you."

They then separated, and immediately the Dead Boxer, like a drunken man, went tottering, rather crest-fallen, towards the inn. On reaching his own room, his rage appeared quite ungovernable; he stormed, stamped, and raved on reflecting that any one was able to knock him down. He called for brandy and water, with a curse to the waiter, swore

deeply between every sip, and ultimately dispatched another messenger for Nell M'Collum.

"That Obeah woman's playing on me," he exclaimed; "because my face is black, she thinks me a fool. Furies! I neither know what she is, nor who the *other* is. But I *will* know."

"Don't be too sure of that," replied Nell, gliding into the apartment—"You can say little, blackey, or think little, avourneen, that *I'll* not know. As to who *she* is, you needn't ax—she won't be long troublin' you; an' in regard to myself, I'm what you see me. Arra, *dher ma chuirp*, man alive, I could lave you in one night that a boy in his first *breestha* (small clothes) could bate the marrow out of you."

"Where did you come from now, granny?"

"From *her* room; she's sick—that was what prevented her from meetin' Lamh Laudher."

"Granny, do you know who she is? I'm tired of her—sick of her."

"You know enough about her to satisfy you. Wasn't she a beautiful creature when Lady S—— tuck her into the family, an' reared her till she was fit to wait upon herself. Warn't you then sarvant to the ould lord, an' didn't I make her marry you, something against her will, too; but she did it to plase me. That was before 'buildin' churches' *druv* you out of the family, an' made you to take to the fightin' trade."

"Granny, you must bring this young fellow across me. Blood! woman, do you know what he did? He knocked me down, granny—struck me senseless!

Fury of hell! *Me!* Only for attempting to ~~kiss~~ his sweetheart!"

"Ha!" said Nell, bitterly, "keep that to yourself, for heaven's sake! *Dher ma chuirp*, man, if it was known, his name would be higher up than ever. Be my sowl, any how, that was the Lamh Laudher *blow*, my boy, an' what *that* is, is well known. The devil curse him for it!"

"Granny, you must assist me in three things. Find a clue to the money—bring this fellow in my way, as you promised—and help me with the landlord's daughter."

"Is there nothin' else?"

"What?"

"*She's* sick."

"Well, let her die, then; *I* don't care."

"In the *other* things I will help you," said Nell; "but you must clear your own way *there*. I can do every thing but *that*. I have a son myself, an' my hands is tied against blood till I find *him* out. I could like to see some people withered, but I can't kill."

"Well, except *her* case, we understand one another. Good night, then."

"You must work *that* for yourself. Good night."



## CHAPTER VI.

IN the mean time a circumstance occurred which scarcely any person who heard it could at first believe. About twelve o'clock the next day the house of Lamh Laudher More was surrounded with an immense crowd, and the whole town seemed to be in a state of peculiar animation and excitement. Groups met, stood, and eagerly accosted each other upon some topic that evidently excited equal interest and astonishment.

LAMH LAUDHER OGE HAD CHALLENGED THE DEAD BOXER.

True. On that morning, at an early hour, the proscribed young man waited upon the Sovereign of the town, and requested to see him. Immediately after his encounter with the black the preceding night, and while Ellen Neil offered to compensate him for the obloquy she had brought upon his name, he formed the dreadful resolution of sending him a challenge. In very few words he stated his intention to the Sovereign, who looked upon him as insane.

"No, no," replied that gentleman; "go home, O'Rorke, and banish the idea out of your head; it is madness."

"But I say *yes, yes*, with great respect to you, sir," observed Lamh Laudher. "I've been banished

from my father's house, and treated with scorn by all that know me, because they think me a coward. Now I'll let them know I'm no coward."

"But you will certainly be killed," said the Sovereign.

"That's to be seen," observed the young man; "at all events, I'd as soon be killed as livin' in disgrace. I'll thank you, sir, as the head of the town, to let the black know that Lamh Laudher Oge will fight him."

"For heaven's sake, reflect a moment upon the ——"

"My mind's made up to fight," said the other, interrupting him. "No power on earth will prevent me, sir. So, if you don't choose to send the challenge, I'll bring it myself."

The Sovereign shook his head, as if conscious of what the result must be.

"That is enough," said he; "as you *are* fixed on your own destruction, the challenge will be given; but I trust you will think better of it."

"Let him know, if you please," added Lamh laudher, "that on to-morrow at twelve o'clock we must fight."

The magistrate nodded, and Lamh Laudher immediately took his leave. In a short time the intelligence spread. From the sovereign it passed to his clerk, from the clerk to the other members of the corporation, and, ere an hour, the town was in a blaze with the intelligence.

"Did you hear what's reported?" was the general question.

*Lamh Laudher Oge has challenged the Dead Boxer!*

The reader already knows how bitterly public opinion had set in against our humble hero; but it would be difficult to describe, in terms sufficiently vivid, the rapid and powerful re-action which now took place in his favor. Every one pitied him, praised him, remembered his former prowess, and after finding some palliative for his degrading interview with Meehaul Neil, concluded with expressing a firm conviction that he had undertaken a fatal task. When the rumor had reached his parents, the blood ran cold in their veins, and their natural affection, now roused into energy, grasped at an object that was about to be violently removed from it. Their friends and neighbors, as we have stated, came to their house for the purpose of dissuading their son against so rash and terrible an undertaking.

"It musn't be," said they, "for whatever was over him wid Meehaul Neil, we know *now* he's no coward, an' that's enough. We musn't see him beat dead before our eyes, at all events, where is he?"

"He's at his aunt's," replied the father; "undher *this* roof he says he will never come till his fame is cleared. Heavens above! For *him* to think of fightin' a man that kills every one he fights wid!"

The mother's outcries were violent, as were those of his female relations, whilst a solemn and even mournful spirit brooded upon the countenances of



his own faction. It was resolved that his parents and friends should now wait upon, and by every argument and remonstrance in their power, endeavor to change the rashness of his purpose.

The young man received them with a kind but somewhat sorrowful spirit. The father, uncovered, and with his grey locks flowing down upon his shoulders, approached him, extended his hand, and with an infirm voice said—

“Give me your hand, John. You’re welcome to your father’s heart an’ your father’s roof once more.”

The son put his arms across his breast, and bowed his head respectfully, but declined receiving his father’s hand.

“Not, father—father dear—not till my name is cleared.”

“John,” said the old man, now in tears, “will you refuse *me*? You are my only son, my only child, an’ I cannot lose you. Your name *is* cleared.”

“Father,” said the son, “I’ve *sworn*—it’s now too late. My heart, father, has been crushed by what has happened lately. I found little charity among my friends. I say, I cannot change my mind, for I’ve sworn to fight him. And even if I had not sworn, I couldn’t, as a man, but do it, for he has insulted them that I love better than my own life. I knew you would want to persuade me against what I’m doin’—an’ that was why I bound myself this mornin’ by an oath.”

The mother, who had been detained a few minutes behind them, now entered, and on hearing

that he had refused to decline the battle, exclaimed—

“Who says that Lamh Laudher Oge won’t obey his mother? Who dare say it? Wasn’t he ever and always an obedient son to me an’ his father? I won’t believe that lie of my boy, no more than I ever believed a word of what was sed against him. *Shawn Oge aroon*, you won’t refuse me, *avillish*. What ’ud become of me, *avich ma chree*, if you fight him? Would you have the mother’s heart broken, an’ our roof childless all out? We lost *one* as it is—the daughter of our heart is gone, an’ we don’t know how—an’ now is your father an’ me to lie down an’ die in desolation widout a child to shed a tear over us, or to put up one prayer for our happiness?”

The young man’s eyes filled with tears; but his cheek reddened, and he dashed them hastily aside.

“No, my boy, my glorious boy, won’t refuse to save his mother’s heart from breakin’; ay, and his grey-haired father’s too—he won’t kill us both—my boy won’t,—nor send us to the grave before our time!”

“Mother,” said he, “if I could I—Oh! no, no. Now, it’s too late—if I didn’t fight him, I’d be a perjured man. You know,” he added, smiling, “there’s something in a Lamh Laudher’s blow, as well as in the Dead Boxer’s. Isn’t it said, that a Lamh Laudher needn’t strike two blows, when he sends his strength with one.”

He stretched out his powerful arm, as he spoke,

with a degree of pride, not unbecoming his youth, spirit, and amazing strength and activity.

"Do not," he added, "either vex me, or sink my spirits. I'm sworn, an' I'll fight him. That's my mind, and it will not change."

The whole party felt, by the energy and decision with which he spoke the last words, that he was immovable. His resolution filled them with melancholy, and an absolute sense of death. They left him, therefore, in silence, with the exception of his parents, whose grief was bitter and excessive.

When the Dead Boxer heard that he had been challenged, he felt more chagrin than satisfaction, for his avarice was disappointed; but when he understood from those members of the corporation who waited on him, that Lamh Laudher was the challenger, the livid fire of mingled rage and triumph which blazed in his large bloodshot eyes absolutely frightened the worthy burghers.

"I'm glad of that," said he—"here, Joe, I desire you to go and get a coffin made, six feet long and properly wide—we will give him room enough; tchee! tchee! tchee!—ah! tchee! tchee! tchee! I'm glad, gentlemen. Herr! agh! tchee! tchee! I'm glad, *I'm glad.*"

In this manner did he indulge in the wild and uncouth glee of a savage as ferocious as he was powerful.

"We have a quare proverb here, Mistor Black," said one of the worthy burghers, "that be my sowl, may be you never heard!"

"Tchee! tchee! agh! What is that?" said

the Boxer, showing his white teeth and blubber lips in a furious grin, whilst the eyes which he fastened on the poor burgher blazed up once more, as if he was about to annihilate him.

"What is it, sar?"

"Faith," said the burgher, making towards the door, "I'll tell you that when I'm the safe side o' the room—devil a ha'porth barrin' that neither you nor any man ought to reckon your chickens before they are hatched. Make money of *that*;" and after having discharged this pleasantry at the black, the worthy burgher made a hasty exit down stairs, followed at a more dignified pace by his companions.

The Dead Boxer, in preparing for battle, observed a series of forms peculiar to himself, which were certainly of an appalling character. As a proof that the challenge was accepted, he ordered a black flag, which he carried about with him, to wave from a window of the inn, a circumstance which thrilled all who saw it with an awful certainty of *Lamh Laudher's* death. He then gave orders for the drums to be beaten, and a dead march to be played before him, whilst he walked slowly up the town and back, conversing occasionally with some of those who immediately surrounded him. When he arrived nearly opposite the market-house, some person pointed out to him a small hut that stood in a situation isolated from the other houses of the street.

"There," added his informant, "is the house where *Lamh Laudher Oge's* aunt lives, and where he himself has lived since he left his father's."

"Ah!" said the black pausing "is he within, do you think?"

One of the crowd immediately inquired, and replied to him in affirmative.

"Will any of you," continued the boxer, "bring me over a half-hundred weight from the market crane? I will show this fellow that a poor chance he has. If he is so strong in the arm and active as is reported, I desire he will imitate me. Let the music stop a moment."

The crowd was now on tiptoe, and all necks were stretched over the shoulders of those who stood before them, in order to see, if possible, what the feat could be which he intended to perform. Having received the half-hundred weight from the hands of the man who brought it, he approached the widow's cottage, and sent in a person to apprise *Lamh Laudher* of his intention to throw it over the house, and to request that he would witness this proof of his strength. *Lamh Laudher* delayed a few minutes, and the Dead Boxer stood in the now silent crowd, awaiting his appearance, when accidentally glancing into the door, he startled as if stung by a serpent. A flash and a glare of his fierce blazing eyes followed.

"Ha! damnation! true as hell!" he exclaimed, "she's with him! Ha!—the Obeah woman was right—the Obeah woman was right. Guilt, guilt, guilt! Ha!"

With terror and fury upon his huge dark features, he advanced a step or two into the cottage, and in a voice that resembled the under-growl of an en-

raged bull, said to his wife, for it was she—" *You will never repeat this—I am aware of you; I know you now! Fury! prepare yourself; I say so to born. Ha!*" Neither she nor Lamh Laudher had an opportunity of replying to him, for he ran in a mood perfectly savage to the half-hundred weight, which he caught by the ring, whirled it round him two or three times, and, to the amazement of the mob who were crowdeed about him, flung it over the roof of the cottage.

Lamh Laudher had just left the cabin in time to witness the feat, as well as to observe more closely the terrific being in his full strength and fury, with whom he was to wage battle on the following day. Those who watched his countenance, observed that it blanched for a moment, and that the color came and went upon his cheek.

"Now, young fellow," said the Boxer, "get behind the cabin and throw back the weight."

Lamh Laudher hesitated, but was ultimately proceeding to make the attempt, when a voice from the crowd, in tones that were evidently disguised, shouted—

"Don't be a fool, young man; husband your strength for you will want it."

The Dead Boxer started again—"Ha!" he exclaimed, after listening acutely, "fury of hell! are you there? ha! I'll grasp *you* yet, though."

The young man, however, felt the propriety of this friendly caution. "The person who spoke is right," said he, "whoever he is. I *will* husband my strength," and he passed again into the cabin.

The Boxer's countenance exhibited dark and fitting shadows of rage. That which in an European cheek would have been the redness of deep resentment, appeared, on his, as the scarlet blood struggled with the gloomy hue of his complexion, rather like a tincture that seemed to borrow its character more from the darkness of his soul, than from the color of his skin. His brow, black and lowering as a thunder-cloud, hung fearfully over his eyes, which he turned upon Lamh Laudher when entering the hut, as if he could have struck him dead with a look. Having desired the drums to beat, and the dead march to be resumed, he proceeded along the streets until he arrived at the inn, from the front of which the dismal flag of death flapped slowly and heavily in the breeze. At this moment the death-bell of the town church tolled, and the sexton of the parish bustled through the crowd to inform him that the grave which he had ordered to be made was ready.

The solemnity of these preparations, joined to the almost superhuman proof of bodily strength which he had just given, depressed every heart, when his young and generous adversary was contrasted with him. Deep sorrow for the fate of Lamh Laudher prevailed throughout the town; the old men sighed at the folly of his rash and fatal obstinacy, and the females shed tears at the sacrifice of one whom all had loved. From the inn, hundreds of the crowd rushed to the churchyard, where they surveyed the newly-made grave with shudderings and wonder at the strangeness of the events which had occurred in the course of the day. The death music, the

muffled drums, the black flag, the mournful tolling of the sullen bell, together with the deep grave that lay open before them, appeared rather to resemble the fearful pageant of a gloomy dream, than the reality of incidents that actually passed before their eyes. Those who came to see the grave departed with heaviness and a sad foreboding of what was about to happen; but fresh crowds kept pouring towards it for the remainder of the day, till the dusky shades of a summer night drove them to their own hearths, and left the church-yard silent.

The appearance of the Dead Boxer's wife in the house where Lamh Laudher resided, confirmed, in its worst sense, that which Nell M'Collum had suggested to him. It is unnecessary to describe the desolating sweep of passion which a man, who like him, was the slave of strong resentments, must have suffered. It was not only from motives of avarice and a natural love of victory that he felt anxious to fight: to these was now added a dreadful certainty that Lamh Laudher was the man in existence who had inflicted on him an injury, for which nothing but the pleasure of crushing him to atoms with his hands, could atone. The approaching battle, therefore, with his direst enemy, was looked upon by the Dead Boxer as an opportunity of glutting his revenge. When the crowd had dispersed, he called a waiter, and desired him to inquire if his wife had returned. The man retired to ascertain, and the Boxer walked backwards and forwards in a state of mind easily conceived, muttering curses and vows of vengeance against her



and Lamh Laudher. After some minutes he was informed that she had not returned, upon which he gave orders that on the very instant of her appearance at the inn, she should be sent to him. The waiter's story in this instance was incorrect; but the wife's apprehension of his violence, overcame every other consideration, and she resolved for some time to avoid him. He had, in fact, on more than one occasion openly avowed his jealousy of her and O'Rorke, and that in a manner which made the unhappy woman tremble for her life. She felt, therefore, from what had just occurred at Widow Rorke's cabin, that she must separate herself from him, especially as he was susceptible neither of reason nor remonstrance. Every thing conspired to keep his bad passions in a state of tumult. Nell M'Collum, whom he wished to consult once more upon the recovery of his money, could not be found. This, too, galled him; for avarice, except during the whirlwind of jealousy, was the basis of his character—the predominant passion of his heart. After cooling a little, he called for his servant, who had been in the habit of acting for him in the capacity of second, and began, with his assistance, to make preparations for to-morrow's battle.



## CHAPTER VII.

Nothing now could exceed the sympathy which was felt for young Lamh Laudher, yet, except among his immediate friends, there was little exertion made to prevent him from accelerating his own fate. So true is it that public feeling scruples not to gratify its appetite for excitement, even at the risk or actual cost of human life. His parents and relations mourned him as if he had been already dead. The grief of his mother had literally broken down her voice so much, that from hoarseness, she was almost unintelligible. His aged father sat and wept like a child; and it was in vain that any of their friends attempted to console them. During the latter part of the day, every melancholy stroke of the death bell, pierced their hearts; the dead march, too, and the black flag waving, as if in triumph over the lifeless body of their only son, the principal support of their declining years, filled them with a gloom and terror, which death, in its common shape, would not have inspired. This savage pageant on the part of the Dead Boxer, besides being calculated to daunt the heart of any man who might accept his challenge, was a cruel mockery of the solemnities of death. In this instance it produced such a sensation as never had been felt in that part of the country. An uneasy feeling of wild romance, mingled with apprehension,

curiosity, fear, and amazement, all conspired to work upon the imaginations of a people in whom that quality is exuberant, until the general excitement became absolutely painful.

Perhaps there was not one among his nearest friends who felt more profound regret for having been the occasion of his disgrace, and consequently of the fate to which he had exposed him, than Meehaul Neil. In the course of that day he sent his father to old Lamh Laudher, to know if young O'Rorke would grant him an interview, the object of which was to dissuade him from the battle.

"Tell him," said the latter, with a composure still tinged with a sorrowful spirit, "that I will not see him to-day. To-morrow I may, and if I don't, tell him, that for his sister's sake, he has my forgiveness."

The introduction of the daughter's name shortened the father's visit, who left him in silence.

Ellen, however, had struggles to endure which pressed upon her heart with an anguish bitter in proportion to the secrecy rendered necessary by the dread of her relations. From the moment she heard of Lamh Laudher's challenge, and saw the funeral appendages, with which the Dead Boxer had darkened the preparations for the fight, she felt her heart sink, from a consciousness that she had been indirectly the murderess of her lover. Her countenance became ghastly pale, and her frame was seized with a tremor which she could hardly conceal. She would have been glad to have shed tears, but tears were denied her. Except the

Boxer's wife, there ~~was~~ no one to whom she could disclose her misery; but alas! for once, that amiable creature was incapable of affording her consolation. She herself, felt distress resulting from both the challenge, and her husband's jealousy, almost equal to that of Ellen.

"I know not how it is," said she, "but I cannot account for the interest I feel in that young man. Yes, surely, it is natural, when we consider that I owe my life to him. Still, independently of that, I never heard his voice, that it did not fall upon my heart like the voice of a friend. We must, if possible, change his mind," she added, wiping away her tears; "for I know that if he fights that terrible man, he will be killed."

At Ellen's request, she consented to see Lamh Laudher, with a view of entreating him, in her name, to decline the fight. Nor were her own solicitations less urgent. With tears and grief which could not be affected, she besought him not to rush upon certain death—said that Ellen could not survive it—pleaded the claims of his aged parents, and left no argument untouched that could apply to his situation and conduct. Lamh Laudher, however, was inexorable, and she relinquished an attempt that she felt to be ineffectual. The direction of her husband's attention so unexpectedly to widow Rorke's cabin, at that moment, and his discovery of her interview with Lamh Laudher, determined her, previously acquainted as she had been with his jealousy, to keep out of his reach, until some satisfactory explanation could be given.

Ellen, however could not rest; her grief had so completely overborne all other considerations, that she cared little, now, whether her friends perceived it or not. On one thing, she was fixed, and that was, to prevent Lamh Laudher from encountering the Dead Boxer. With this purpose she wrapped herself in a cloak about ten o'clock, and careless whether she was observed or not, went directly towards his aunt's house.—About two-thirds of the way had probably been traversed, when a man, wrapped up in a cloak, like herself, accosted her in a low voice, not much above a whisper.

"Miss Neil," said he, "I don't think it would be hard to guess where you are going."

"Who are you that asks?" said Ellen.

"No matter; but if you happen to see young O'Rorke to-night, I have a message to send him that may serve him."

"Who are you?" again inquired Ellen.

"One that cautions *you* to beware of the Dead Boxer; one that pities and respects his unfortunate wife; and one who, as I said, can serve O'Rorke."

"For God's sake, then, if you can, be quick; for there's little time to be lost," said Ellen.

"Give him this message," replied the man, and he whispered half a dozen words into her ear.

"Is *that* true?" she asked him; "and may he depend upon it?"

"He may, as there's a God above me. Good night!" He passed on at a rapid pace.

When Ellen entered his aunt's humble cabin,

*Lamh Laudher* had just risen from his knees. Devotion, or piety if you will, as it is in many cases, though undirected by knowledge, may be frequently found among the peasantry associated with objects that would appear to have little connection with it. When he saw her he exclaimed with something like disappointment:—

“Ah! Ellen dear, why did *you* come? I would rather *you* hadn’t crossed me now, darling.”

His manner was marked by the same melancholy sedateness which we have already described. He knew the position in which he stood, and did not attempt to disguise what he felt. His apparent depression, however, had a dreadful effect upon Ellen, who sat down on a stool, and threw back the hood of her cloak; but the aunt placed a little circular arm-chair for her somewhat nearer the fire. She declined it in a manner that argued something like incoherence, which occasioned O’Rorke to glance at her most earnestly. He started, on observing the wild lustre of her eye, and the woe-begone paleness of her cheek.

“Ellen,” said he, “how is this? Has any thing frightened you? Merciful mother! aunt, look at her!”

The distracted girl sank before him on her knees, locked her hands together, and while her eyes sparkled with an unsettled light, exclaimed—

“John!—John!—*Lamh Laudher Oge*—forgive me, *before you die!* I have murdered you!”

“Ellen love, Ellen”—

"Do you *forgive* me? *do* you? Your blood is upon me, Lamh Laudher Oge!"

"Heavens above! Aunt, she's turned! Do I forgive *you*, my heart's own treasure? How did you ever offend me, my darling? You know you never did. But *if* you ever did, my own Ellen, I *do* forgive you."

"But *I* murdered you—and that was because my brother said *he* would do it—an' I got afraid, John, that he might do you harm, an' afraid to tell you too—an'—an' so you promise me you won't fight the Dead Boxer? Thank God! thank God! then your blood will *not* be upon *me*!"

"Aunt, she's lost," he exclaimed; "the brain of my *colleen dhas* is turned!"

"John, won't you save *me* from the Dead Boxer? There's nobody able to do it but you, Lamh Laudher Oge!"

"Aunt, aunt, my girl's destroyed," said John, "her heart's broke! Ellen!"

"But to-morrow, John—to-morrow—sure you won't fight him to-morrow?—if you do—if you do he'll kill you—an' 'twas *I* that—that"—

O'Rorke had not thought of raising her from the posture in which she addressed him, so completely had he been overcome by the frantic vehemence of her manner. He now snatched her up, and placed her in the little arm chair alluded to; but she had scarcely been seated in it, when her hands became clenched, her head sand, and the heavy burthen of her sorrows was forgotten in a long fit of insensibility.

Lamh Laudher's distraction and alarm prevented him from rendering her much assistance; but the aunt was more cool, and succeeded with considerable difficulty in restoring her to life. The tears burst in thick showers from her eyelids, she drew her breath vehemently and rapidly, and, after looking wildly around her, indulged in that natural grief which relieves the heart by tears. In a short time she became composed, and was able to talk collectedly and rationally.

This, indeed, was the severest trial that Lamh Laudher had yet sustained. With all the force of an affection as strong and tender as it was enduring and disinterested, she urged him to relinquish his determination to meet the Dead Boxer on the following day. John soothed her, chid her, and even bantered her, as a cowardly girl, unworthy of being the sister of Meehaul Neil, but to her, as well as to all others who had attempted to change his purpose, he was immovable. No; the sense of his disgrace had sunk too deep into his heart, and the random allusions just made by Ellen herself to the Dead Boxer's villainy, but the more inflamed his resentment against him.

On finding his resolution irrevocable, she communicated to him in a whisper the message which the stranger had sent him. Lamh Laudher, after having heard it, raised his arm rapidly, and his eye gleamed with something like the exultation of a man who has discovered a secret that he had been intensely anxious to learn. Ellen could now delay no longer, and their separation resembled that of



persons who never expected to meet again. If Lamh Laudher could at this moment have affected even a show of cheerfulness, in spite of Ellen's depression it would have given her great relief. Still, on her part, their parting was a scene of agony and distress which no description could reach, and on his, it was sorrowful and tender; for neither felt certain that they would ever behold each other in life again.

A dark sunless morning opened the eventful day of this fearful battle. Gloom and melancholy breathed a sad spirit over the town and adjacent country. A sullen breeze was abroad, and black clouds drifted slowly along the heavy sky. The Dead Boxer again had recourse to his pageantries of death. The funeral bell tolled heavily during the whole morning, and the black flag flapped more dismally in the sluggish blast than before. At an early hour the town began to fill with myriads of people. Carriages and cars, horsemen and pedestrians, all thronged in one promiscuous stream towards the scene of interest. A dense multitude stood before the inn, looking with horror on the death flag, and watching for a glimpse of the fatal champion. From this place hundreds of them passed to the house of Lamh Laudher More, and on hearing that the son resided in his aunt's they hurried towards her cabin to gratify themselves with a sight of the man who dared to wage battle with the Dead Boxer. From this cabin, as on the day before, they went to the churchyard, where a platform had already been erected beside the grave. Against

the railings of the platform stood the black coffin intended for Lamh Laudher, decorated with black ribbons that fluttered gloomily in the blast. The sight of this and of the grave completed the wonder and dread which they felt. As every fresh mass of the crowd arrived, low murmurs escaped them, they raised their heads and eyes exclaiming—

“Poor Lamh Laudher! God be merciful to him!”

As the morning advanced, O'Rorke's faction, as a proof that they were determined to consider the death of their leader as a murder, dressed themselves in red ribbons, a custom occasionally observed in Ireland even now, at the funerals of those who have been murdered. Their appearance passing to and fro among the crowd made the scene with all its associations absolutely terrible. About eleven o'clock they went in a body to widow Rorke's, for the purpose of once more attempting to dissuade him against the fight. Here most unexpected intelligence awaited them—**LAMH LAUDHER OGE HAD DISAPPEARED.** The aunt stated that he had left the house with a strange man, early that morning, and that he had not returned. Ere many minutes the rumor was in every part of the town, and strong disappointment was felt, and expressed against him in several round oaths, by the multitude in general. His father, however, declared his conviction that his son would not shrink from what he had undertaken, and he who had not long before banished him for cowardice, now vouched for his courage. At the old man's suggestion, his friends

still adhered to their resolutions of walking to the scene of conflict in a body.

At twenty minutes to twelve o'clock, the black flag was removed from the inn window, the muffled drums beat, and the music played the same dead march as on the days of uttering the challenge. In a few minutes the Dead Boxer, accompanied by some of the neighboring gentry, made his appearance, preceded by the flag. From another point, the faction of Lamh Laudher fluttering in blood-red ribbons, marched at a solemn pace towards the churchyard. On arriving opposite his aunt's, his mother wept aloud, and with one voice all the females who accompanied her, raised the Irish funeral cry. In this manner, surrounded by all the solemn emblems of death, where none was dead, they slowly advanced until they reached the platform. The Dead Boxer, attended by his own servant, as second, now ascended the stage, where he stood for a few minutes, until his repeater struck twelve. That moment he began to strip, which having done, he advanced to the middle of the stage, and in a deep voice required the authorities of the town to produce their champion. To this no answer was returned, for not a man of them could account for the disappearance of Lamh Laudher. A wavy motion, such as passes over the forest top under a low blast, stirred the whole multitude: this was the result of many feelings, but that which prevailed amongst them was disappointment. A second time the Dead Boxer repeated the words, but except the stir and hum which we have

described, there was not a voice heard in reply. Lamh Laudher's very friends felt mortified, and the decaying spirit of the Lamh Laudher More rallied for a moment. His voice alone was heard above the dead silence,—

"He *will* come, black," said he, "my son will come; and I would now rather see him dead than that he should fear to be a man."

He had scarcely spoken, when a loud cheer, which came rapidly onward, was heard outside the church-yard. A motion and a violent thrusting aside, accompanied by a second shout, "he's here!" gave intimation of his approach. In about a minute, to the manifest delight of all present, young Lamh Laudher, besmeared with blood, leaped upon the platform. He looked gratefully at the crowd, and in order to prevent perplexing inquiries, simply said—

"Don't be alarmed—I had a slight accident, but I'm not the worse of it."

The cheers of the multitude were now enough to awaken the dead beneath them; and when they had ceased, his father cried out—

"God support you, boy—you're my true son; an' I know you'll show them what the Lamh Laudher blood an' the Lamh Laudher blow is."

The young man looked about him for a moment, and appeared perplexed.

"I'm here alone," said he; "is there any among you that will second me?"

Hundreds immediately volunteered this office, but there was *one* who immediately sprung upon the

stage, to the no small surprise of all present—it was Meehaul Neil. He approached Lamh Laudher and extended his hand, which was received with cordiality.

“Meehaul,” said O’Rorke, “I thank you for this.”

“Do not,” replied the other; “no man has such a *right* to stand by you *now* as I have. I never knew till this mornin’ why you did not strike me the last night we met.”

The Dead Boxer stood with his arms folded, sometimes looking upon the crowd, and occasionally glaring at his young and fearless antagonist. The latter immediately stripped, and when he stood out erect and undaunted upon the stage, although his proportions were perfect, and his frame active and massy, yet when measured with the Herculean size of the Dead Boxer, he appeared to have no chance.

“Now,” said he to the black, “by what rules are we to fight?”

“If you consult *me*,” said the other, “perhaps it is best that every man should fight as he pleases. You decide that. I am the challenger.”

“Take your own way, then,” said O’Rorke; “but you have a secret, black—do you intend to use it?”

“Certainly, young fellow.”

“I have *my* secret, too, said Lamh Laudher; “an’ now I give you warning that I will put it in practice.”

“All fair; but we are losing time,” replied the

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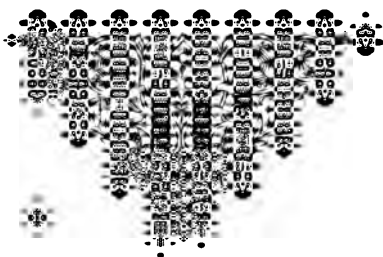
had not activity to guard against it on seeing which, a short and exulting cheer rose from the multitude. We are not now giving a detailed account of this battle, as if reporting it for a newspaper; it must suffice to say, that Lamh Laudher was knocked down twice, and the Dead Boxer four times, in as many rounds. The black, on coming to the seventh round, laughed, whilst the blood trickled down his face. His frame appeared actually agitated with inward glee, and indeed a more appalling species of mirth was never witnessed.

It was just when he approached Lamh Laudher, chuckling hideously, his black visage reddened with blood, that a voice from the crowd shouted—

“He’s laughing—the blow’s coming—O’Rorke, remember your instructions.”

The Boxer advanced, and began a series of feints, with the intention of giving that murderous blow which he was never know to miss. But before he could put his favorite stratagem in practice, the activity of O’Rorke anticipated his *ruse*, for in the dreadful energy of his resentment he not only forgot the counter-secret which had been confided to him, but every other consideration for the moment. With the spring of a tiger he leaped towards the black, who by the act was completely thrown off his guard. This was more than O’Rorke expected. The opportunity, however, he did not suffer to pass; with the rapidity of lightning he struck the savage on the neck immediately under the ear. The Dead Boxer fell, and from his ears, nostrils, and mouth the clear blood sprung out, streaking,

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## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the spectators saw and heard what had occurred, their acclamations rose to the sky ; cheer after cheer pealed from the grave-yard over a wide circuit of the country. With a wild luxury of triumph they seized O'Rorke, placed him on their shoulders, and bore him in triumph through every street in the town. All kinds of mad but good-humored excesses were committed. The public-houses were filled with those who had witnessed the fight, songs were sung, healths drank, and blows given. The streets, during the remainder of the day, were paraded by groups of his townsmen belonging to both factions, who on that occasion buried their mutual animosity in exultation for his victory.

The worthy burghers of the corporation, who had been both frightened and disgusted at the dark display made by the Dead Boxer previous to the fight, put his body in the coffin that had been intended for Lamh Laudher, and without any scruple, took it up, and went in procession with the black flag before them, the death bell again tolling, and the musicians playing the dead march, until they deposited his body in the inn.

After Lamh Laudher had been chaired by the people, and borne throughout every nook of the town, he begged them to permit him to go home.

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hear something for my good, I would follow him. I did so, an' I observed that he eyed me closely as we went along. We took the way that turns up the Quarry, an' afther gettin' into one of the little fir groves off the road, he made a stab at my neck, as I stooped to tie my shoe that happened to be loose. As God would have it, he only tore the skin above my forehead. I pursued the villain on the spot, but he disappeared among the trees, as if the earth had swallowed him. I then went into Darby Kavanagh's, where I got my breakfast; an' as I was afraid that you might by pure force prevent me from meetin' the black, I didn't stir out of it till the proper time came."

This startling incident occasioned much discussion among his friends, who of course were ignorant alike of the person who had attempted his assassination, and of the motives which could have impelled him to such a crime. Several opinions were advanced upon the circumstance, but as it had failed, his triumph over the Dead Boxer, as unexpected as it was complete, soon superseded it, and many a health was given "to the best man that eversprung from the blood of the Lamh Laudhers!" for so they termed him, and well had he earned the epithet. At this moment an incident occurred which considerably subdued their enjoyment. Breen, the constable, came to inform them that Nell McCollum, now weltering in her blood, and at the point of death, desired instantly to see them.

Our readers have been, no doubt, somewhat sur-

prised at the sudden disappearance of Nell. This artful and vindictive woman had, as we have stated, been closely dogged through all her turnings and windings, by the emissaries of Mr. Brookleigh. For this reason she kept aloof from the particular haunt where she was in the habit of meeting her private friends. The preparations, however, for the approaching fight, and the tumult it excited in the town, afforded her an opportunity of giving her spies the slip. She went, on the evening before the battle, to a small dark cabin in one of the most densely inhabited parts of the town, where, secure in their privacy, she found Nanse M'Collum, who had never left the town since the night of the robbery, together with the man called Rody, and another hardened ruffian with red hair.

"*Dher ma chuirp*," said she, without even a word of previous salutation, "but I'll lay my life that Lamh Laudher bates the black. In that case he'd be higher up wid the town than ever. He knocked him down last night."

"Well," said Rody, "an' what if he does? I would feel rather satisfied at that circumstance. I served the black dog for five years, and a more infernal tyrant never existed, nor a milder or more amiable woman than his wife. Now that you have his money, the sooner the devil gets himself the better."

"To the black *diouol* w.d yourself an' your Englified *gosther*," returned Nell indignantly; "his wife! *Damno' orth*, don't make my blood boil by speaking a word in *her* favor. If Lamh Laudher

comes off best, all I've *struv* for is knocked on the head. *Dher Chiernah*, I'll crush the sowl of his father or I'll not die happy."

"Nell, you're bittherer than soot, and blacker too," observed Rody.

"Am I?" said Nell, "an' is it from the good crathur that was ready, the other night, to murder the mild innocent woman that he spakes so well of, that we hear sich discoorse?"

"You're mistaken there, Nelly," replied Rody; "I had no intention of taking away her life, although I believe my worthy comrade here in the red hair, that I helped out of a certain gaol once upon a time, had no scruples."

"No, curse the scruple!" said the other.

"I was in the act of covering her eyes and mouth to prevent her from either knowing her old servant or making a noise,—but d—— it, I was bent to *save* her life that night, rather than take it," said Rody.

"I know this friend of yours, Rody, but a short time," observed Nell; "but if he hasn't more spunk in him than yourself, he's not worth his feedin'."

"Show me," said the miscreant, "what's to be done, life or purse—an' here's your sort for both."

"Come, then," said Nell, "by the night above us, we'll thry your mettle."

"Never heed her," observed Nanse; "aunt, you're too wicked an' revengeful."

"Am I?" said the aunt. "I tuck an oath many

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or child, off o' the earth, wid one clarm, if I wished."

"Why don't you wither young Lamh Laudher then?" said Rody.

"*If* they fight to-morrow," replied Nell; "mind I say *if* they do—an' I now tell you they won't—but I say *if* they do—you'll see he'll go home in the coffin that's made for him—an' I know how that'll happen. Now at eleven we'll meet here if we can to-morrow."

The two men then slunk out, and with great caution proceeded towards different directions of the town, for Nell had recommended them to keep as much asunder as possible, lest their grouping together might expose them to notice. Their place of rendezvous was only resorted to on urgent and necessary occasions.

The next morning, a little after the appointed hour, Nell, Rody, and Nanse McCollum, were sitting in deliberation upon their future plans of life, when he of the red hair entered the cabin.

"Well," said Nell, starting up,—"what—what was done? show me?"

The man produced a dagger slightly stained with blood.

"*Damno orrum!*" exclaimed the aged fury, "but you've failed—an' all's lost if he beats the black."

"I did fail," said the miscreant. "Why, woman if that powerful active fellow had got me in his hands, I'd have tasted the full length of the dagger myself. The d——l's narrow escape I had."

"The curse of heaven light on you, for a cowardly dog!" exclaimed Nell, grinding her teeth with disappointment. "You're a faint-hearted villain. Give me the dagger."

"Give me the money," said the man.

"For what? no, consumin' to the penny; you didn't earn it."

"I did," said the fellow, "or at all evints attempted it. Ay, an' I must have it before I lave this house, an' what is more, you must lug out my share of the black's prog."

"You'll get nothing of that," said Rody; "it was Nell here, not you, who took it."

"One hundred of it on the nail, this minnit," said the man, "or I bid you farewell, an' then look to yourselves."

"It's not mine," said Rody; "if Nell shares it, I have no objection."

"I'd give the villain the price of a rope first," she replied.

"Then I am off," said the fellow, "an' you'll curse your conduct."

Nell flew between him and the door, and in his struggle to get out, she grasped at the dagger, but failed in securing it. Rody advanced to separate them, as did Nanse, but the fellow by a strong effort attempted to free himself. The three were now upon him, and would have easily succeeded in preventing his escape had it not occurred to him that by one blow he might secure the whole sum. This was instantly directed at Rody, by a back thrust, for he stood behind him. By the rapid



change of their positions, however, the breast of Nell M'Collum received the stab that was designed for another.

A short violent shriek followed, as she staggered back and fell."

"Staunch the blood," she exclaimed, "staunch the blood, an' there may be a chance of life yet."

The man threw the dagger down, and was in the act of rushing out, when the door opened, and a *posse* of constables entered the house. Nell's face became at once ghastly and horror-stricken, for she found that the blood could not be staunched, and that, in fact, eternity was about to open upon her.

"Secure *him!*" said Nell, pointing to her murderer, "secure him, an' send quick for Lamh Laidher More. God's hand is in what has happened! Ay, *I* raised the blow for *him*, an' God has sent it to my own heart. Send, too," she added, "for the Dead Boxer's wife, an' if you expect heaven, be quick."

On receiving Nell's message the old man, his son, wife, and one or two other friends, immediately hurried to the scene of death, where they arrived a few minutes after the Dead Boxer's wife.

Nell lay in dreadful agony; her face was now a bluish yellow, her eye-brows were bent, and her eyes getting dead and vacant.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "Andy Hart! Andy Hart! it was the black hour you brought me from the right way. I was innocent till I met you, an' well

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wife of the Dead Boxer. She stooped down to raise the stranger up; "Unhappy man," said she, "look up, I am your sister!"

"No," said Nell, "no—no—no. There's more of my guilt. Lamh Laudher More, stand forrid, you and your wife. You lost a daughter long ago. Open your arms and take her back a blameless woman. She's your child that I robbed you of as *one* punishment; the *other* blow that I intended for you has been struck here. I'm dyin'."

A long cry of joy burst from the mother and daughter, as they rushed into each other's arms. Nature, always strongest in pure minds, even before this *denouement*, had, indeed, rekindled the mysterious flame of her own affection in their hearts. The father pressed her to his bosom, and forgot the terrors of the scene before him, whilst the son embraced her with a secret consciousness that she was, indeed, his long-lost sister,

"We couldn't account," said her parents, "for the way we loved you the day we met you before the magistrate; every word you said, Alice darling, went into our hearts wid delight, an' we could hardly ever think of your voice ever since, that the tears didn't spring to our eyes. But we never suspected, as how could we, that you were our child."

She declared that she felt the same mysterious attachment to them, and to her brother also, from the moment she heard the tones of his voice on the night the robbery was attempted.

"Nor could I," said Lamh Laudher Oge, "account for the manner I loved yeu."

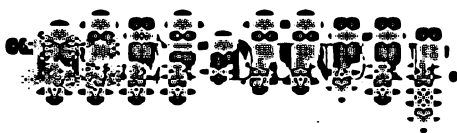
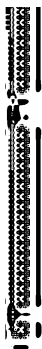
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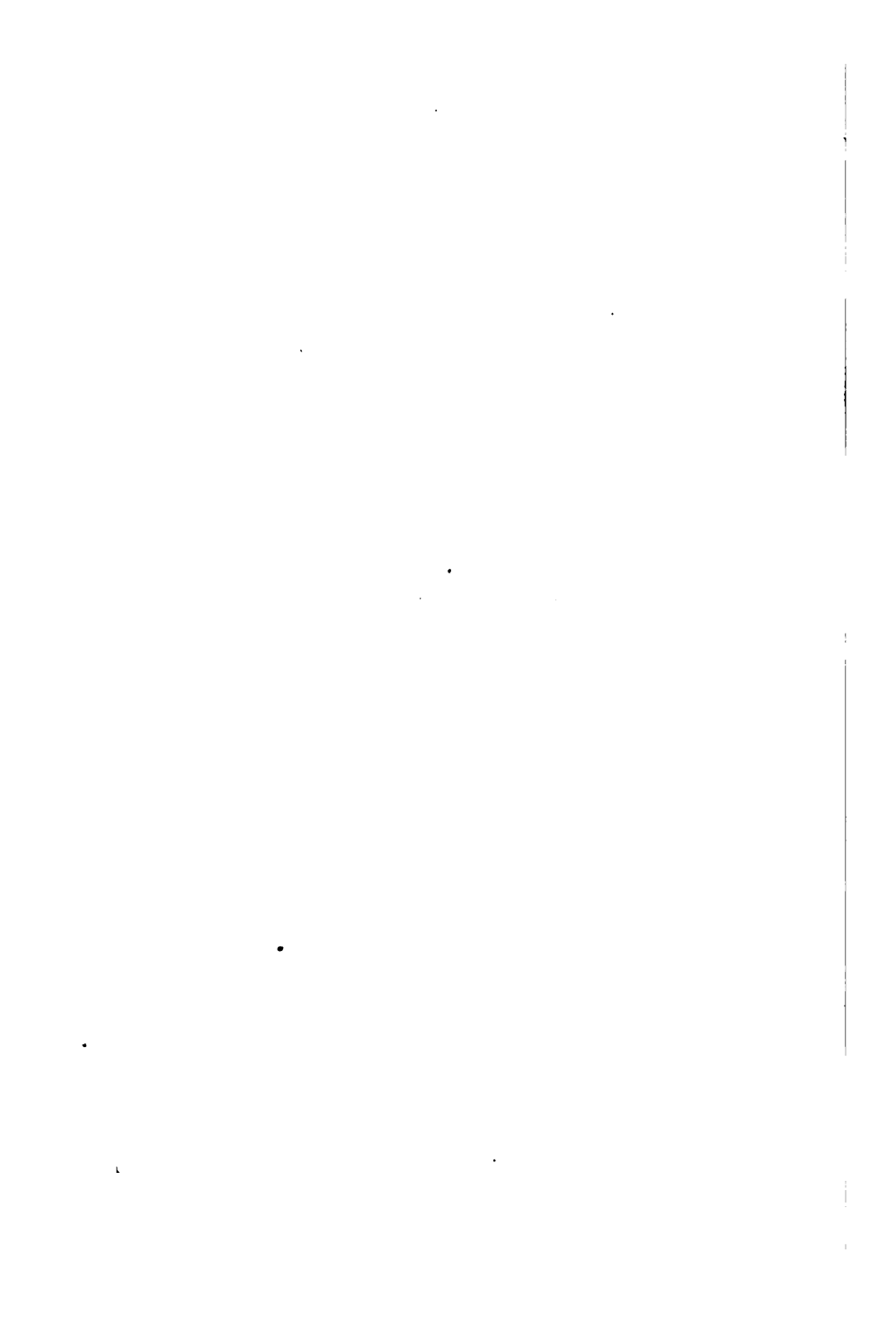
"It is—it is," said the son. "But, mother, I didn't, as I'm to stand before God, aim the blow at *you*, but at Rody."

"Lamh Laudher!" said she, forgetting herself, "I ax your forgive——."

Her head fell down before she could conclude the sentence, and thus closed the last moments of Nell M'Collum.

After the lapse of a short interval, in which Lamh Laudher's daughter received back her money, the certificate, and the gospel, her brother discovered that Rody was the person who had, through Ellen Neil, communicated to him the secret that assisted him in vanquishing the Dead Boxer, a piece of information which saved him from prosecution. The family now returned home, where they found Meehaul Neil awaiting their arrival, for the purpose of offering his sister's hand and dowry to our hero. This offer, we need scarcely say, was accepted with no sullen spirit. But Lamh Laudher was not so much her inferior in wealth as our readers may suppose. His affectionate sister divided her money between him and her parents, with whom she spent the remainder of her days in peace and tranquillity. Our great grandfather remembered the wedding, and from him came down to ourselves, as an authentic tradition, the fact that it was an unrivalled one, but that it would never have taken place were it not for the terrible challenge of the Dead Boxer





## ELLEN DUNCAN.

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**THERE** are some griefs so deep and overwhelming, that even the best exertions of friendship and sympathy are unequal to the task of soothing or dispelling them. Such was the grief of Ellen Duncan, who was silently weeping in her lone cottage on the borders of Clare—a county at that time in a frightful state of anarchy and confusion. Owen Duncan, her husband, at the period about which our tale commences, resided in the cabin where he was born and reared, and to which, as well as a few acres of land adjoining, he had succeeded on the death of his father. They had not been long married, and never were husband and wife more attached. About this time outrages began to be perpetrated; and soon increased fearfully in number. Still Owen and Ellen lived happily, and without fear, as they were too poor for the marauders to dream of getting much booty by robbing; and their religion being known to be “the ould religion ov all ov all,” in a warfare that was exclusively one of party, they were more protected than otherwise. Owen never was particularly thrifty; and as his means were



small, was generally embarrassed, or rather somewhat pinched in circumstances. Notwithstanding this, however, he was as happy as a king; and according to his unlettered neighbors' artless praise, "there wasn't a readier hand, nor an opener heart in the wide world—that's iv he had id—but he hadn't an' more was the pity." His entire possessions consisted of the ground we have mentioned, most part of which was so rocky as to be entirely useless—a cow, a couple of pigs, and the "the ould cabin," which consisted of four mud walls, covered with thatch, in which was an opening, "to let in the day-light, an' to let out the smoke." In the interior there was no division, or separate apartment, as the one room contained the cooking materials, and all other necessities, beside their bed, which was placed close to the fire, and, of course, nearly under the opening in the roof. If any one spoke to Owen about the chances of rain coming down to where they slept, his universal answer was, "Shure we're naither shugar nor salt, anyhow; an' a dhrop ov rain, or a thrifle ov wind, was niver known to do any body harm—*barrin'* it brought the typhus; bud God's good, an' ordhers all for the best." Owen had been brought up in this way, and so he could *live* by his labor, he never thought of needless luxuries; and Ellen, seeing him contented, was so herself.

For some months previous to the time of which we write, Owen's affairs had been gradually getting worse and worse; and it was with no pleasing anticipations that he looked forward to his approaching

rent day. His uneasiness he studiously kept a secret from his wife, and worked away seemingly with as much cheerfulness as ever, hoping for better days, and *trusting in Providence!* However, when within a week of the time that he expected a call from the agent, he found that with all his industry he had been only able to muster five and twenty shillings, and his rent was above five pounds. So, after a good deal of painful deliberation, he thought of selling his single cow, thinking that by redoubled exertion he might after a while be enabled to repurchase her; forgetting, that before the cow was sold was really the time to make the exertion. A circumstance that greatly damped his ardor in this design was the idea of his wife's not acquiescing in it; and one evening, as they sat together by the light of the wood and turf fire, he thus opened his mind—

"Ellen, asthore, its myself that's sorry I haven't a fine large cabin, and a power o' money, to make you happier an' comfortabler than you are."

"Owen," she interrupted, "don't you know I'm very happy? an' didn't I often tell you, that it was the will of Providence that we shud be poor? So it's sinful to be wishin' for riches."

"Bud, Ellen a cushla, it's growin' worse wid us every day; an' I'm afeard the throuble is goin' to come on us. You know how hard the master's new agint is—how he sould Paddy Murphy's cow, an' turned him out, bekase he couldn't pay his rint; an' I'm afeard I'll have to sell '*Black Bess*,' to prevint his doin' the same wid us."

"Well, Owen agra, we mustn't murmur for our

distresses; so do whatever you think right—times won't be always as they are now."

"Bud, Ellen," said he, "you're forgettin' how you'll miss the dhrop ov milk, an' the bit of fresh butter, fur whin we part wid the poor baste, you won't have even thim to comfort you."

"Indeed, an' iv I do miss them, Owen," she answered, "shure it's no matther, considherin' the bein' turned out ov one's home into the world. Remember the ould sayin' ov, 'out ov two evils always chuse the laste;' an' so, darlint, jist do whatever you think is fur the best."

After this conversation, it was agreed on by both that Owen should set out the next day but one for the town, to try and dispose of the "cow, the cra-thur;" and although poverty had begun to grind them a little, still they had enough to eat, and slept tranquilly. However, it so happened, that the very morning on which he had appointed to set out, "*Black Bess*" was seized for a long arrear of a tax that had not been either asked or paid there for some time, and driven off, with many others belonging to his neighbors, to be sold. Now you must know, good reader, that there is a feeling interwoven, as it were, in the Irish nature, that will doggedly resist anything that it conceives in the slightest or most remote degree oppressive or unjust; and that feeling then completely usurped all others in Owen's mind. He went amongst his friends, and they condoled with one another about their grievances; there was many a promise exchanged, that they would stand by each other in

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that had consisted of two or three sods of turf heaped upon the floor, had almost entirely gone out; the stools and *bosses* were tossed negligently here and there; and the appearance of the entire apartment was quite different from its usual neat and tidy trim. Her head was bent a little, and her hands were clasped tightly around her knees, while her body was swaying to and fro, as if the agitation of her mind would not allow of its repose. Her eyes were dry, but red from former weeping; and she was occasionally muttering, "No, he can't be guilty"—"Owen commit a murder!—It must be an untruth!" and such like expressions. Gradually, as she thus thought aloud, her motions became more rapid, and her cheeks were no longer dry, while the light that entered through the open door becoming suddenly shaded, she turned round, and raised her tearful eyes to question the intruder. She sprang eagerly forward, and hung on his neck, (for it was Owen himself,) while she joyfully exclaimed—

"Oh, heaven be praised, yer come back at last, to give the lie to all their reports, an' to prove yer innocence."

"Ellen, my darlint," he answered, "I knew you'd be glad to get me back," and he kissed again and again her burning lips; "but what do you mane, acushla?—What reports do you spake ov, an' ov what am I accused?"

"Oh, thin, Owen, I'm glad you didn't even hear ov id; an' the poliss here searchin' the house to make you pres'ner. Shure, avick, Bill Daly, the

proctor, that sazed poor *Black Bess* was murdered the very mornin' you wint to shoot the hares; an' on account ov yer borryin' the gun, an' threatenin' him the day ov the sale, they said it was you that done id; but I gev thim all the lie, fur I knew you wor innocent. Now, Owen, a hagar, you look tired, sit down, an' I'll get you somethin' to ate. Och, bud I'm glad that yer returned safe!"

The overjoyed wife soon heaped fresh turf on the fire, and partly blowing, partly fanning it into a flame, hung a large iron pot over it, from a hook firmly fixed in the wall. While these preparations were going forward, Owen laid aside his rough outside coat, and going to the door, looked out, as if in irresolution.

"Ellen," at length said he, turning suddenly round, "I'm thinkin' that I'd betther go to the poliss barrack an' surrindher—or rather, see what they have to say agin me; as I'm an innocent man, I've no dhread; an' if I wait till they come an' take me, it'll look as iv I was afeard."

"Thru for you, agra," she answered; "bud it's time enough yit a bit—no one knows ov yer bein' here. You look slaved, an' had betther rest yerself, an' ate a pratee or two. I have no milk ov my own to offer you now, but I'll go an' thry an' get a dhrop from a neighbor."

When Ellen returned with a little wooden noggin full, her husband was sitting warming his hands over the fire; and it was then she recollected that he had not brought back the gun with him; be-

sides, when she cast a glance at his clothes, they were all soiled with mud and clay, and torn in many places. But these circumstances did not for a moment operate in her mind against him, for she knew from the very manner of his first question, and the innocence of his exclamation, that the accusations and suspicions were all false. Even though he had not attempted to explain the cause of his protracted absence, she felt conscious that it was not guilt, and forebode to ask any question about it. It was he first opened the subject, as they sat together over their frugal meal.

"Ellen," said he, "sence I saw you last, I wint through a dale ov hardship; an' I little thought on my return, that I'd be accused ov so black a crime."

"Och, shure enough, Owen darlint; but I hope it'll be all for the best. I little thought I'd see the day that you'd be suspected ov murdher."

"Well, Ellen aroon, all's in it is, it can't be helped. Bud as I was sayin'—whin I left this, I cut across by Sheemus Doyle's, an' so up into the mountain, where I knew the hares were coorsin' about in plenty. I shot two or three ov thim; an' as night began to fall, I was thinkin' ov comin' home, whin I heerd the barkin' ov a dog a little farther up, in the wild part, where I never ventured afore. I dunna what prompted me to folly id; bud, any how, I did, an' wint on farther an' farther. Well, Ellen agra, I at last come to a deep valley, full up a'most of furze an' brambles, an' I seen a black thing runnin' down the edge ov id. It was so far

off, I thought it was a hare, an' so I lets fly, an' it rowled over an' over. Whin I dhrew near, what was it bud a purty black spaniel; an' you may be shure I was sorry for shootin' it, an' makin' such a mistake. I lays down the gun, an' takes id in my arms, an' the poor crathur licked the hand that shot id. Thin suddenly there comes up three sthrange min, an' sazin' me as if I wor a child, they carrid me down wid them, cursin' an' abusin' me all the way. As they made me take a solemn oath not to revale what I saw there, I can't tell you any more: but they thrated me badly, an' it was only yestherday I escaped."

"Well, Owen, a hatur, we ought to be thankful that you're back here safe; bud do you think the magisthrate will be satisfied with this story—they are always anxious to do justice, but they must be satisfied."

"In throth, they are, machree: but shure I'll sware to id; an', besides, you know, the raal murderer may be discovered—for God never lets it, ov all other crimes, go athout punishment. An' now I'll just go to the barracks at onst, an' be out ov suspinse."

Ere Duncan had concluded his sentence, the tramp of feet was heard outside, and in a few seconds the cabin was full of armed men, who came to take him prisoner. He had been seen entering his cabin; and they immediately, i. e. as soon as they could muster a party, set out to make him captive. As he was known to most of them, and did not make the slightest attempt at resistance,



they treated him gently, but bound his hands firmly behind his back, and took every necessary precaution. Though Ellen, while it seemed at a distance, had conversed calmly about his surrender, she was violently agitated at the appearance of the armed force. She clung to her husband's knees, and refused to part with him, wildly screaming, "He's innocent! My husband's innocent!" and when all was prepared, she walked by his side to the magistrate's house, (a distance of three miles,) her choking sobs and burning tears attesting the violence of her uncontrolled feelings. A short examination was gone through there; and the circumstantial evidence that was adduced made the case look very serious. One man positively swore, that he had seen Duncan pass by in the morning, in the direction where the body was found, and that he was armed with a gun. Another, that in about an hour afterwards he had heard a shot, but supposed it was some person coursing, and that the report was just where the body was found, and where Owen had been seen proceeding to. His only cow having been seized by Daly, a threat that he was heard uttering, and his absence from home, was duly commented on; and finally, he was committed to prison to abide his trial at the Ennis Assizes. While all this was going forward, Ellen's emotions were most agonizing. She stared wildly at the magistrate and the two witnesses; and as the evidence was proceeded with, she sometimes hastily put back her hair, as if she thought she was under the influence of a dream. But when his final

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spirit drooped; the gloom of imprisonment, the idea of danger, the ignominy of public execution and all the horrors of innocent conviction, gradually wore away his mental strength; and when the assize time approached, he was but a thin shadow of the former bluff, healthy Owen Duncan. In so short a time as this, can care and harrowing thought exercise its influence on the human frame !

Never was there a finer or more heavenly morn-  
in than that which ushered in the day of trial. The court-house was crowded to suffocation, the mob outside fearfully numerous, and never before, perhaps, was Ennis in such a state of feverish excitement. Daly's murder was as nought in the minds of all, in comparison with Duncan's accusation. Alas ! the former was an occurrence of too frequent repetition, to be *very much* thought of ; but the latter—namely, Owen's being suspected—was a subject of the extremest wonder. His former high character—his sobriety—his quietness, and his being a native of the town, in some measure accounted for this latter feeling; and there was an inward conviction in most men's mind's, that he was guiltless of the crime for which he was accused. Although the court-house was crowded, yet when the prisoner was called to the bar, a pin could be heard to drop in any part of the place. There was a single female figure leaning on the arm of an aged and silver-haired, though hale and healthy countrymen, within a few feet of the dock ; and as the prisoner advanced, and laying his hand on the iron railing, confronted the judges and the court,

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glance from which to glean even the shadow of hope, she covered her face with her hands. A moment or two elapsed, and she grew more assured, and the counsel for the Crown proceeded with the examination.

"Ellen Duncan, is not that your name?" was the first question.

"It is, Sir," she shrinkingly answered, without raising her eyes.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"Do I know the pres'ner at the bar?" she reiterated; "do I know Owen Duncan? Shure, isn't he my husband?"

"Do you recollect the night of the twenty-first of September?"

"I do, Sir."

"Can you swear to whether your husband was at home on that night or not?"

Her voice faltered a little as she answered in the negative; and on the presiding judge repeating the question, with the addition of, "Did he return at all next day?" it seemed as if she first thought that her answers might criminate him still farther, and clasping her hands convulsively together, and raising her face to the bench, while the scalding tears chased each other down her sunken cheek, she passionately exclaimed—

"Oh, for the love of heaven, don't ask me any thing that 'ill be worse for *him*! Don't, counsellor jewel, don't!—don't ask me to swear any thing that 'ill do *him* harm; for I can't know what I'm sayin' now, as the heart within me is growin wake."

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"charge." He recapitulated the evidence—dwelt on the strong circumstances that seemed to bespeak his guilt—spoke of the mournful increase of crime—of laws, and life, and property being at stake—and finally closed his address with a sentence expressive of the extreme improbability of the prisoner's defence; for he, on being asked if he had any thing further to say, replied in the negative, only asserting, in the most solemn manner, his innocence of the charge.

The jury retired, and Ellen's hard, short breathings, alone told that she existed. Her head was thrown back, her lips apart, and slightly quivering, and her eyes fixedly gazing on the empty box, with an anxious and wild stare of hope and suspense. Owen's face was very pale, and his lips livid—there was the slightest perceptible emotion about the muscles of his mouth, but his eye quailed not, and his broad brow had the impress of an unquenched spirit as firmly fixed as ever on its marble front. A quarter of an hour elapsed, and still the same agonising suspense—another, and the jury returned not—five minutes, and they re-entered. Ellen's heart beat as if it would burst her bosom; and Owen's pale cheek became a little more flushed, and his eye fully of anxiety. The foreman in a measured, feelingless tone pronounced the word "Guilty!" and a thrill of horror passed through the entire court, while that sickness which agonises the very depths of the soul convulsed Owen's face with a momentary spasm, and he faltered "God's will be done." The judge slowly drew on the black cap,

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fast down her cheeks, as she thought how soon they were doomed to part for ever. Hope was not, however, entirely dead within her, for the jury had strongly recommended him to mercy; and ignorant as she was of forms and ceremonies—helpless as lone woman in misfortune always is—she had determined on going to Dublin, to kneel at the feet of the Lord Lieutenant—then the proud and whimsical Duke of —, and there to solicit his pardon. Having hesitated for some time as to the manner in which she should break it to him, and ask his advice, she thus began—

“Owen, dear Owen! do you know what I’ve been thinkin’ ov, an’ where I’ve been thinkin’ ov goin’?”

There was no answer returned for some time, and on looking at him more earnestly, she was astonished to find that he had sank into a profound slumber. “Guilt,” thought she, “is not there!” and her resolution was taken instantly—she would not wake him—she would not let him know her purpose—and if she succeeded, her eyes flashed through her tears at the anticipation of his rapturous surprise. Stooping lower, she gently pressed her lips to his; and kneeling beside his bed, poured forth a short but fervent prayer to Him in whom alone we can put our trust—“In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind”—“Who preserveth not the life of the wicked, but giveth right to the poor.” There was something exceedingly and touchingly beautiful in the attitude of that young wife—her hands clasped, her lips mov-

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vanced a step or two for the purpose of entering, a brute in human shape pushed her with a blow of the end of his musket back against the pillar. He was about to repeat his violence, when the poor creature fell on her knees before him and screamed—

“Sojer darlin’, don’t stop me! I’m only goin’ in to plade fur my husband’s life, an’ shure you wont prevent me? I’ve traveled many a wairy mile to get here in time; an’, oh! fur marcy’s sake let me pass.”

At this moment the carriage of the eccentric and beautiful Lady —, one of the wildest, strangest, and best hearted females of the Irish Court, set down its lovely burden. She had seen the whole transaction of the sentinel, and heard Ellen’s pathetic appeal, and her heart was instantly moved in her favor for the example of fashion had not yet frozen up its finer feelings. Partly through the workings of a softened heart, and partly to make what was then all the rage, a scene or sensation, she resolved instantly to get her admitted to the presence of the Duke—nay, to present her herself. She was well known to be a favorite, and whatever whim of hers took place, no matter how extravagant, was sure to meet his hearty concurrence. She desired Ellen to rise and follow her; and the poor creature’s eyes streamed with tears as she invoked a fervent blessing on the head of her lovely protectress. While passing up the grand staircase, amid the wondering gaze and surpressed titter of many a pampered menial, she instructed her how

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marcy, if you'll grant him a reprieve, you'll have all our prayers, and (in an under tone) your Excellency knows you want thim?"

The Duke seemed a little bewildered, as if he could not make out what it meant, and the glittering crowd now surrounded the group; when Ellen, who had ventured to look timidly up, conceived that the Duke hesitated about the pardon, (poor creature! she little knew that he had not even heard of Owen's trial,) eagerly grasped the drapery of his chair, and while the big tears rolled from beneath her eyelids, exclaimed—

"Oh! may the great and just Providence, that sees the workin' ov all our hearts, pour a blessin' on yer Lordship's head—may *His* holy grace be wid you for iver an' iver, an' do listen to my prayers! My husband is innocent—an' oh! as you hope for marcy at the last day, be marciful now to *him*."

"Lady ——," said the Duke, "what is the meaning of all this—will you explain?"

"Your Excellency," answered she, in the natural sweet pathos of her tones, "it is a poor man who has been condemned to die on circumstantial evidence. He has been strongly recommended to mercy, and this weeping female is his wife. I found her outside praying for admission, and have brought her hither. She has traveled mostly on foot upwards of ninety miles to ask a pardon, and I trust you will not refuse a *reprieve*, till your Grace has time to inquire into the circumstance. 'This is the head and front of my offending.'"

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## THE PROCTOR'S DAUGHTER.

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"Hurroo! at id agin. Success, Briney. Ha! take that, you ould dust. Will you bewitch our cattle now, Nanny? Whoo—ha, ha, ha!—at id agin, boys—that's your sort."

Such were a few of the explosives of mingled fun and devilment that proceeded from a group of ragged urchins, who were busily employed in pelting with hard mud, sods and other missiles, an old and decrepit woman, whose gray hair and infirmities ought to have been her protection; but whose reputation as an evil disposed witch proved quite the contrary. Nanny, for such was her name, was leaning, or rather sitting, against a bank at the road side, shaking occasionally her crutch at her tormentors, and muttering a heavy curse as missile after missile fell thickly around her. The shouts of laughter proceeding from the annoying children, as she tried in vain to rise, and impotently threatened, made her imprecations come doubly bitter; but her eye was never wet, nor did she once even by a look appeal to their pity. Her figure was bent with age, and her shaking hands brown and fleshless—her hair

was grey and wiry, and escaped from beneath her cap, in short, thin, tangled masses—her eyes were dark and deep set, and her lips and mouth had fallen in as her teeth had gradually decayed. She was clad in a russet gown, much the worse for the wear, and a scarlet cloak, or rather a cloak that had once been scarlet, but was now completely faded from its original color. It had been broken here and there, but was pieced with different colored cloths, so as to appear a motely and strange garment; and her bony feet were bare and unprotected. Nanny, from different circumstances, was unanimously elected the witch or *bugbear* of the village; and though the brats were *then* so busy annoying her, at night, or in a lonesome place, they would fly like lightning even at her approach; and some of them actually trembled while shouting, though they did not like to exhibit their fear to their companions. In the first place, she lived completely alone in a hovel on the mountain side, where, save heath, rock, and fern, there was not a single thing on which the eye could rest; then, no one knew from whence she came, and lights were frequently seen shining through her unglazed window at hours when spirits were supposed to be abroad; besides, more than once a group of dark figures had been observed standing at twilight near her door, and were always set down as ministering demons, awaiting the pleasure of their mistress. Whenever a cow ceased giving milk—when a lamb or pig got any disease and died—it was unanimously attributed to the spite and venom of “Nanny the



witch;" in fact, no human being could be viewed with more mingled feelings of fear and hate than she was by all the inhabitants of the village. The boys still continued their unfeeling attack; and she now was silent and gloomy, and did not menace nor even mutter a curse, but her firmness had not left her, for her brow was darkly bent, and her small black eyes emitted a flash of wild though concentrated anger and revenge. Nor did those who passed from time to time, by word or gesture discourage the young urchins from their attack, sometimes they even stood looking complacently on, wondering at the reckless courage of the boys, as *they* would not for worlds dare to rise a hand against one so very powerful. Suddenly a louder whoop than any they had yet given, told that they had just invented some new mode of annoyance, and a short, hard-featured, red-headed boy, whom they called Briney, ran whooping and hallooing towards them, bearing a large hairy cap, which he triumphantly declared was full of rotten eggs—those delicious affairs which smash so delightfully off an unprotected face, and which used to be in great demand when pillories were in fashion.

"I must have first shot!" roared Briney, as he placed his burden down in the midst, and seized one of the eggs it contained.

"Sorra a bit, Briney!" screamed another, striding before him—"I've a betther aim nor you."

"You a betther aim!" scornfully retorted he; "thry id:" and his hand was upraised in the act of pelting, but was as suddenly stopped and withheld,

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"May the blessins ov the poor and persecuted folly on yer path, my purty child!" gratefully exclaimed the old woman, as her eyes rested on the cherub face and infantin figure of her protectress, and they now were dewy and wet with tears.

"Shall I help you to rise, Nanny?" asked she, her little heart dancing with pleasure at hearing the fervent wish: "iv you like to go home, an' you think me sthrong enough, I'll help you on!"

"From my heart I thank you, my purty golden haired child," said the old woman, as with her assistance she at length stood up; "bud you seem to know who I am, and I wondher yer not afeard ov me. Minny, I think they called you—who is the happy father ov my little darlin'?"

"I'm Minny Whelan," gently answered the little girl; upon which Nanny shrunk hastily back, and a fearful change overspread her features.

"*Minny Whelan!*—you the proctor's daughter? Those smiling lips—those tinder, soft eyes—that rich yellow hair—an' that warm an' feelin' heart, Minny Whelan's. Oh, it can't, it mustn't be—I won't believe id!"

The little girl laughed, although wonder lurked in her eye, and repeated innocently,

"Sure enough, I am the proctor's daughter: bud you don't hate me for id—do you?"

"Come close to me, child, till I look upon you," said Nanny, in a cold and altered tone of voice; and then, as Minny fearlessly advanced, she laid her aged hands on her head, and pushing back the profusion of her curling hair, looked long and anx-

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I couldn't hate *you*, although yer father—bud no matter. Minny, good bye—may the Almighty guard you."

The day passed away as Summer days are wont, in softness and languor, and the sun descended in gold and crimson, leaving a bright halo in the west to mark his resting place. Night came on serene and still, and the quiet moon ascended her heavenly throne, while the refreshing dews fell upon the flowers, whose leaves opened to receive them, parched as they were with the burning lustre of the mid-day sun. Midnight had already passed; and all was as silent as if no living or created thing existed upon the earth to mar its splendid beauty with the wild indulgence of its fiercer passions. A strong light was gleaming from the interior of Nanny's cabin, which we have already said was situated on the mountain side; and the noisy sounds of revelry were heard proceeding from within. Could any of the superstitious have summoned courage to approach sufficiently near, and listen for a moment, the idea of spirits would soon be dissipated in the bluff, hoarse voices which were laughing and grumbling, and singing, sometimes alternately, and sometimes all together. But we had better introduce the reader to the interior, and then he will be a better judge of the nature of the orgies carried on.

The cabin consisted of but one small apartment, in the centre of which blazed a huge fire (summer though it was) of dried peat. The smoke sought egress where it might, but still left a sufficient ca-

nopy over the heads of the occupants, as completely to hide the dingy and charred rafters, and did not seem in the slightest degree to annoy the optical powers of any one, so accustomed were they to this kind of atmosphere. Round this fire about ten were seated or squatted down, and were all at the time busily employed in some noisy and apparently angry disputation. However, this did not prevent the bottle from being freely passed amongst them; and so cordial were they in embracing it, that Nanny, who sat a little apart, was often called on to replenish it with mountain-dew. On a table or dresser that stood by the wall, were three or four large pistols, besides an old sword or two, and a few rusted bayonets: piled against it were two large muskets, evidently kept with more care than the rest of the arms, for they were brightly polished, and looked even new. A couple of powder-horns, a tin box containing shot and bullets, and a large iron mallet, used in breaking open doors, completed the array, which could leave no doubt as to the men who occupied the cabin.

"Come, Nanny acushla, give us another dhrop of that you gev us last," exclaimed one, whose rolling eyes gave token of approaching intoxication; "you're not used to be sparín', an' considherín' the way you get id, needn't be so—eh? Dick, what do you say to another drink?"

"Game to the last," answered the man addressed—"never refuse id."

"Why, Nanny," observed a low but muscularly formed man who seemed from his manner to exer-

ise some slight command amongst his associates, "what's the matther wid you to-night? Sure we're goin' to do what you've long been axin' us, an' what you first gev us lave to meet here for—an' by doin' so we've got the fame of bein' not quite right. The villain of a procthor that sint poor Bob off afore he could look about him, 'ill resave his pay to-night, anyhow. What say you, boys?"

"No doubt ov it!—All right!—Whoo! sartinly!" they grumbled and shouted in reply; and then, the whisky having been brought, the health of Nanny's absent son, and their companion, was loudly proposed and drank.

"I say, Dick," hiccupped the first speaker, who now began to wax drunk, "what is your op—op—opinion should we do to ould Whelan? You know, I'm (hiccup) not natherally crule, bud suppose (hiccup) we jist cut the ears off the baste, an' (hiccup) lave him hard ov hearin' for the rest ov his life!"

"I'm not the man to disagree wid a rasonable iday," ironically answered Dick.

"What do you say to that, my ould (hiccup) woman?" again asked he, addressing Nanny, who had drawn near to listen; "suppose we sarve him that-a-way, will you be (hiccup) satisfied; or maybe you'd sooner we'd prevint his bein' annoyed wid a cough by (hiccup) cuttin' his informin' throat!"

While he spoke, an indescribable expression lighted up the old woman's eye, and she stood a moment, as if a struggle was going on between long-brooded-over revenge and some newly awaken-

ed sympathy. The rest of the men were busy with other schemes, and did not even hear the last conversation, for they had before agreed to pay Whelan a visit that night, and Nanny had eagerly entered into their intentions; for she had an only son, who, being wild and dissipated, had got connected with the very gang at present in her cabin, and through Whelan's means (he having informed against him) was transported. An Irish mother soon looks upon the faults of a darling child with levity: and when he was torn from her arms, in the madness of grief she had vowed vengeance against Whelan; and though he soon after removed to where he then was, she followed him, and took up her residence on the mountain, where, as she was a stranger, and had no apparent means of living, a report of her communion with evil spirits was soon spread abroad. This she rather encouraged than otherwise, by the advice of the men whom she fixed on as the completers of her revenge, and by such means the lights and nightly noises were placed to the account of anything but their real cause.

She had endured many griefs, and many mortifications, from her reputation as a witch, but met every thing in that way with patience, as the dream of her soul was revenge, and that dream by such means alone could be realized. However, when on the very point of its completion, one of those sudden and mysterious changes which often takes place in the human mind made her waver in her purpose; and the child of her intended victim having behaved so tenderly and so kindly when all



he rest hooted at and tormented her, made her fervently wish that she could turn the fierce men around her from that fell purpose which she herself had nourished till it grew into a fixed, and, she treaded, an unalterable determination.

"Hadn't yez betther wait," she tremblingly began, scarcely knowing what she was about to propose—"another night 'ill do as well for Whelan."

"How's this," interrupted one of them, "Nanny, you growing lukewarm!—you proposin' another night—are you beginnin' to be afeard we'll be hindered from payin' him off, or are you repentin' yer former anxious desire?"

"No—no!" hastily answered she, dreading lest they should discover her feelings, as she well knew that many amongst them had revenge to be gratified as well as herself; "I don't repine as regards him, bud—bud—his daughter—poor little Minny—the purty goolden-haired child!—I wouldn't like any thing 'ud harm her, an' I'm afeard ov her bein' hurted—that's all."

"*He* did not feel so six years ago," said a deep voice at her elbow, "whin yer only son was sint off from home an' counthry through *his* manes!"

Nanny started, she knew not why, at the tones of the speaker, and turned round to look closer at him; but his back was towards her, and a large loose coat prevented all recognition of his person; besides, bringing an occasional newly enrolled stranger there, was a common circumstance, so she

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hand, and though his face was studiously averted, she heard him say solemnly—

“Nanny, good bye!—my promise I'll keep sacred—the good child shall not be touched!”

She had not time to utter her thanks, for his hand as hastily relinquished its hold, and ere she could speak, all were gone, and she heard the buzz of their voices, as in a group they descended the mountain.

The bright moonbeams silvered the motionless leaves of the trees that surrounded Whelan's cottage—there was not a stir within—no light gleamed from the lattice, and the small thin brook that bubbled through the long grass a little in its front, seemed to hush its merry song to a mere low trickling sound, as if in unison with the universal repose. A dark group of figures stood in the little garden before the door, as if debating how they should act. Two of them, separated a little from the rest, conferred together, one of whom was the stranger we have already noticed, and the other the man we have spoken of as seeming to possess some command over them all. Suddenly the latter started, and exclaimed in the quick, sharp tone of command—

“Advance, men, an' smash the door—there's no use in delayin' longer.”

An almost instantaneous crash was the answer, and the door flew from its hinges, and four or five of the men rushed into the cottage, while the rest kept watch outside. Exclamations of surprise, mingled with harsh epithets, were heard within;

and then they appeared a second time, dragging with them the unfortunate and trembling owner, whom they had just torn from his bed. A loud shout from the rest spoke their eagerness for his punishment; and amidst prayers for mercy, and entreaties, he was dragged to the centre of the garden, placed on his knees, and his hands firmly tied behind his back.

"Now, Misther Whelan, *acushla*," asked one, in a jeering tone, "would you be jist pleased to make yer choice between two purty little invintions of ours—*cardin'* an' *ear-ticklin'*."

The poor man trembled violently, and his livid lips opened, but he could not utter a word.

"What an obstinate, silent ould baste you are," said the same man, "not to give a civil answer to my question. Bud maybe the look o' this plaything id drive spake out ov you—oh, you may stare now!" Saying this, he drew forth a board with a thick handle, the bottom part of which was closely studded with nails and sharp pieces of iron, in imitation of the cards they use for wool, and continued—"Would you admire the taste of this in the flesh on your back, my informin' codger!—eh?"

Upon this, shouts of "Card him! card him!" arose from the group, and his hands were quickly unloosed, and he was violently dashed on his face, while some held his legs and others his arms. Then his back was stripped, and the stranger laid the board flatly on it, with the iron points touching the flesh, while another stood up with the large mallet ready to drive them in, the shrieks of the victim

becoming more and more faint. Just as the man who held the weapon last named was about to strike, and just as a demon grin of satisfied vengeance distorted the otherwise handsome features of the stranger, a light and tiny form flew screaming towards them, her long yellow hair floating in the night-breeze, and her white dress hanging loosely about her delicate limbs. It was Minny, who, unmindful of all, and seeing only her father, threw herself on her knees beside him, exclaiming in tones of agony :

"Oh, my father—my dear father—what is the matter?—what are they goin' to do wid you?"

The stranger started at the tones of her voice, and on gazing at her for a moment, flung the card to a distance, and catching her in his arms, kissed away the tears which covered her cheeks, as she struggled for release.

"Is it *you*," he said with much emotion, "that I promised to purtect?—*You*, who succoured an' saved me when I was dyin' for want? An' are *you* the daughter ov Whelan the procthor?"

The men, perplexed at the apparition of the child, mechanically had released their prisoner; and he, starting up with the sudden hope of freedom, stood confronting the stranger, who yet held his child.

"Gracious Providence!" he exclaimed in wonder, as the moonlight streamed on the face he was trying to recognize—"Is id—can id be Robert Dillon?"

"Yis, Whelan!" was the answer, "it is the man you name—the man you caused to be thried

an' banished, an' the man who came here to have revinge ! ”

“ Oh, don't hurt him—don't hurt him—he is *my* father ! ” cried the little Minny, who now also seemed to recognize him.

“ Iv he was surrounded wid fiends,” answered Ditlon, kissing her fair smooth brow, “ iv he was for ever on the watch, I'd still have my revenge : bud for your sake, sweet, good-natured child—for your sake, I'll not allow him to be touched ! ”

A murmur here began to rise among some of the men, while the leader, with one or two others, seemed to take part with the returned son of Nanny Dillon. Upon this he added—

“ I was weary an' wake wid fatigue an' hunger—I couldn't move a step further than jist to lave the road an' lie in a dhry ditch, as I thought, to die, jist as I complate the journey to my native place ! But this little girl—this goolden-haired child—kem to me, an' raised my head, an' poured a sweet draught of milk inio my mouth, an' brought me food, an' sat by me, an' talked wid me, till I was at last able to join wid you ! An' afther this—*afther this*, would you have me harm any one be-longin' to her—even though he is my bitterest inimy ? ”

The quick changing of purpose—the sudden transitions of the Irish nature—are proverbial; and *then* those who had been loudest in their murmurs were loudest in their cries of approval; and a deep *huzza* of exultation at the magnanimity he displayed, told Dillon that he had little to fear from

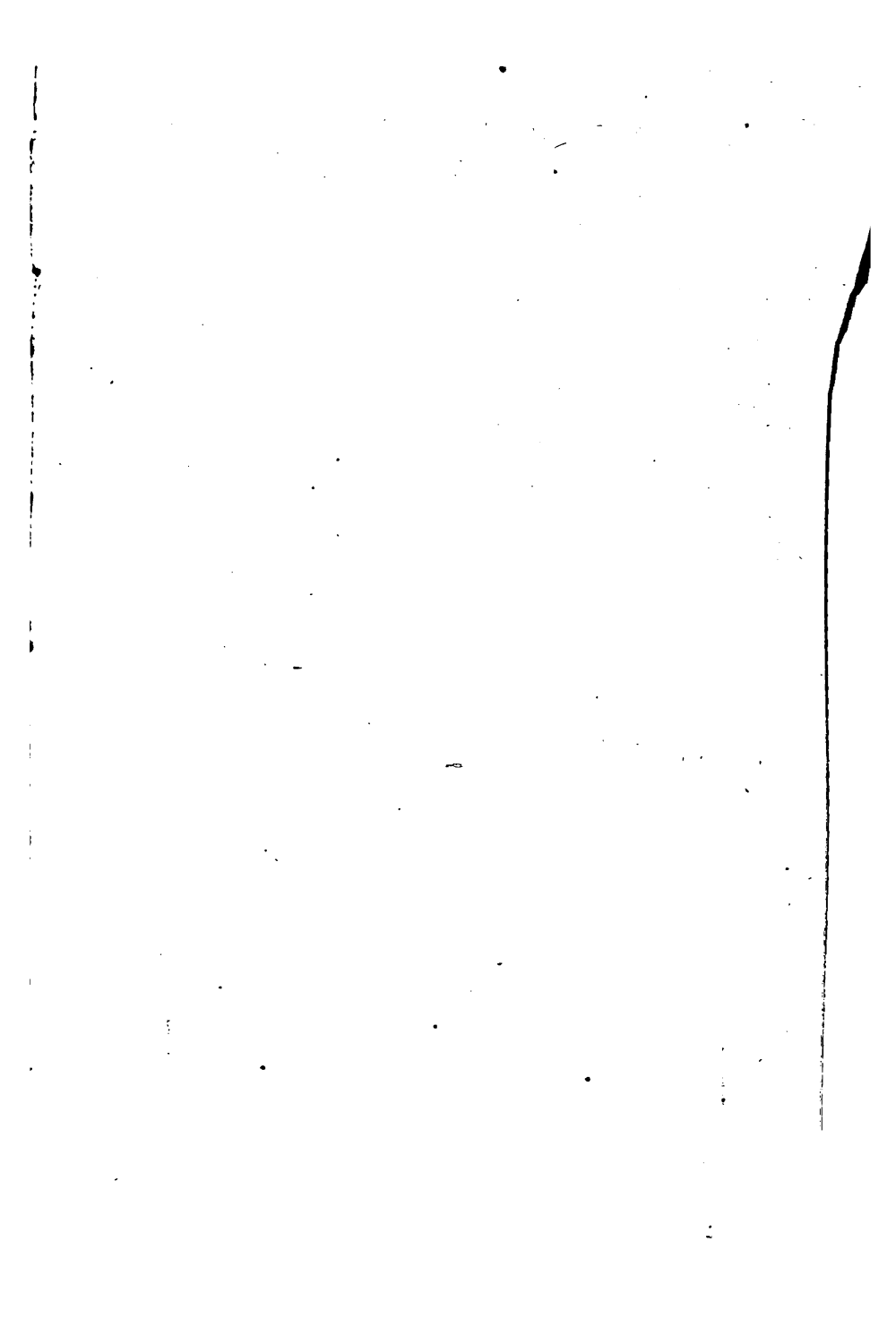
their opposition. So once more embracing the little girl, he gave her hand to her father, and taking the leader's arm, strode away, exclaiming :

"Whelan, you may thank your child—for 'tis she has saved you !"

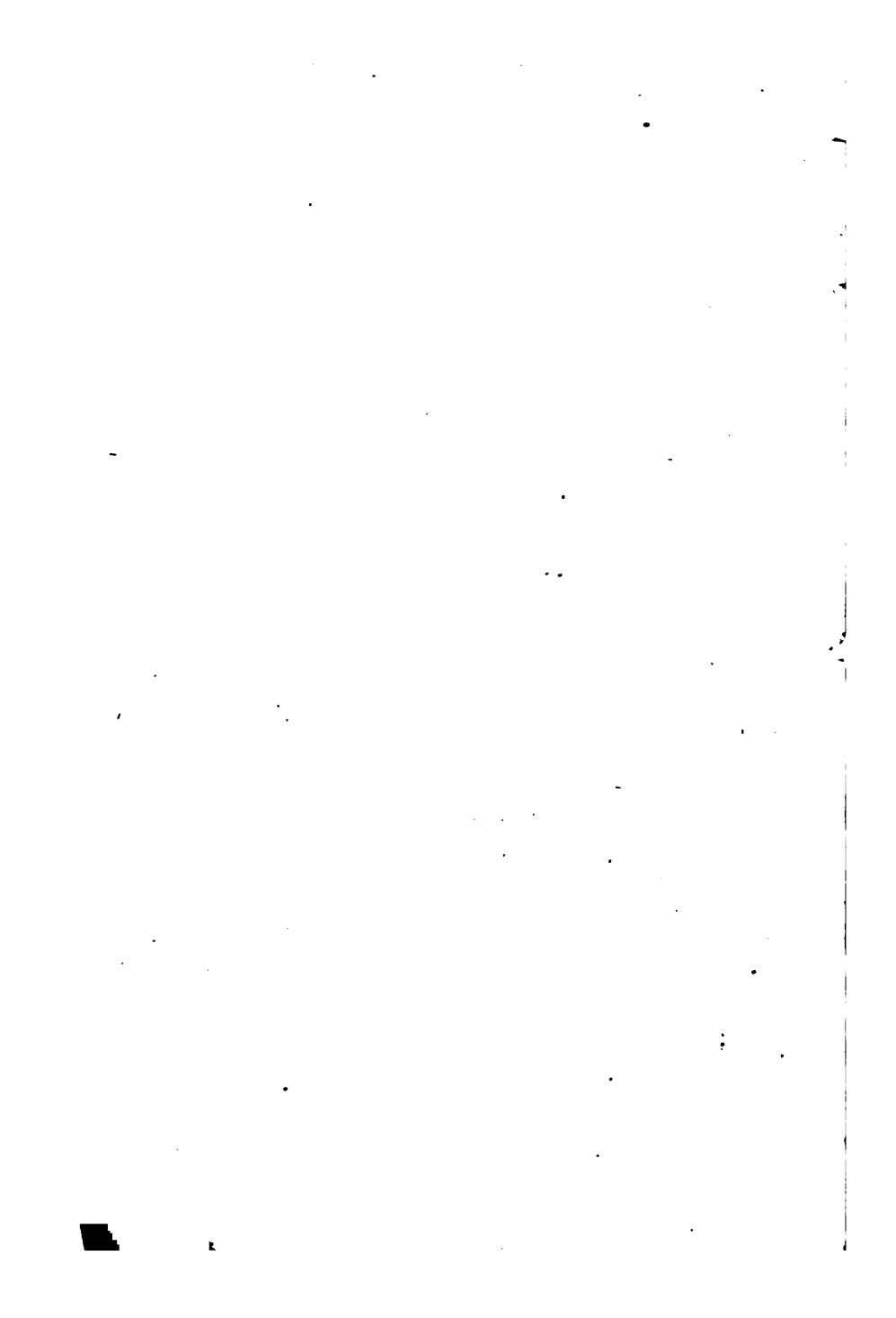
The party all followed after him; and in a few moments more there was no trace of the scene of violence that had been partly enacted, and the brook's low bubblings, as before, alone disturbed the silence of the slumbering night.

We will not attempt to describe poor Nanny's joy at her son's making himself known, and informing her of the circumstances that had taken place—enough to say, he had managed to escape before his time was out; but as no one informed against him, he was suffered to remain in peace, and manage a small farm in the next county, where he and his mother soon after retired, as he determined totally to forsake his old mischievous pranks.

We were present at the village altar, when Minny, who had grown up in beauty and gentleness, gave her hand to a youth—the selected one of her heart—and her grey-headed parent looked meekly on, blessing that Providence who had given him such a child.









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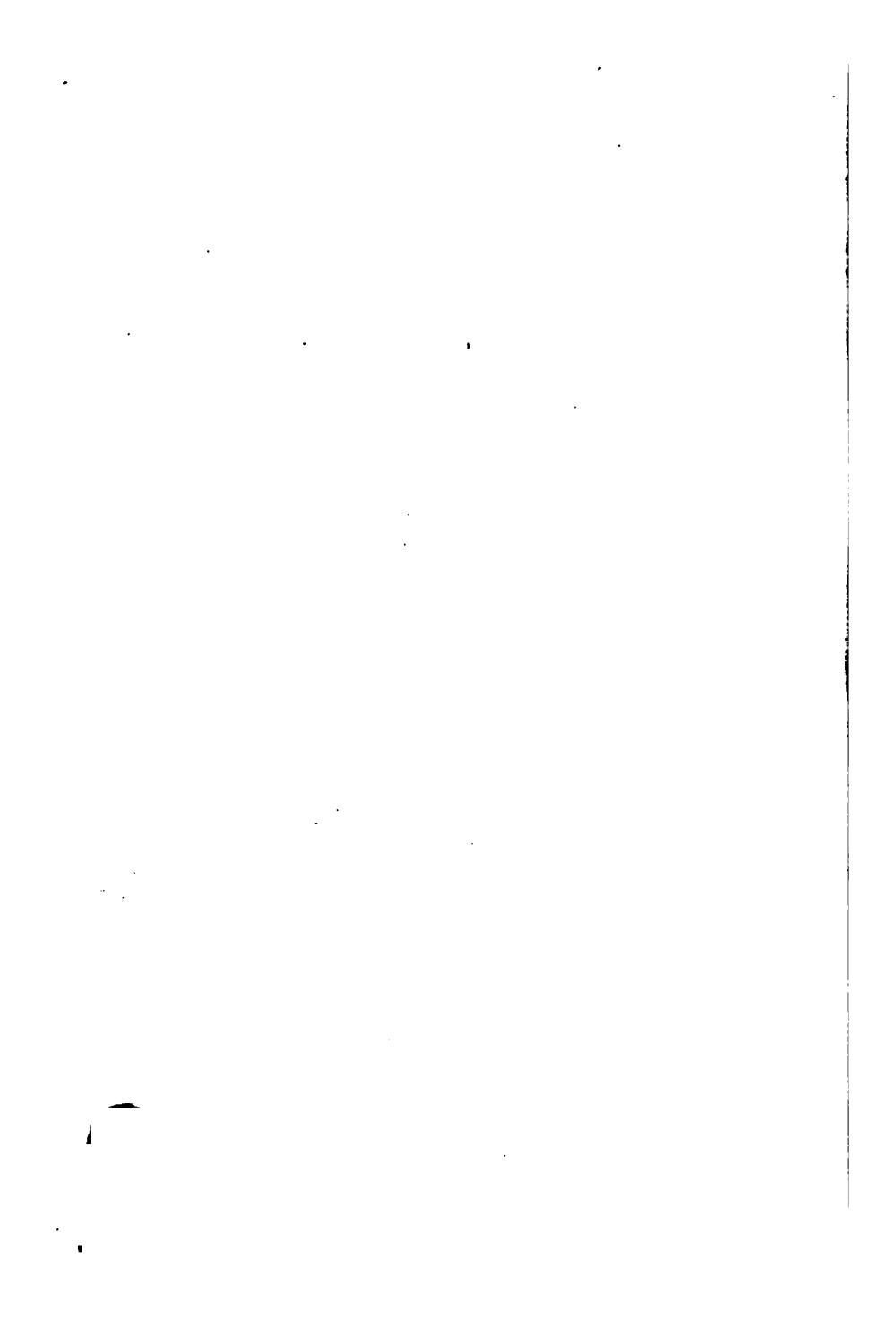




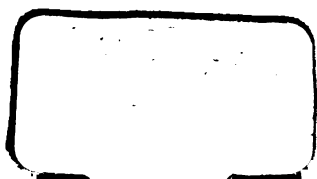








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